

THE UK'S BEST SELLING TATTOO MAGAZINE

skin Deep

40 BEAUTY

Free inside
40 BEAUTIFUL CREATURES

THIS MONTH

We bolt on fireworks as we:

Take a walk on the dark side with

**STEFANO
ALCANTARA**

Sit with a true Japanese
master in the shape of

**SHODAI
HOKUO**

Talk to a man with
no face! It can only
be Slipknot's

**COREY
TAYLOR**

Get down at
Coney Island with

POOCH
as he previews his
latest work and our
jaws hit the floor

**DAWNII
FANTANA**

shows us what a Painted
Lady really gets up to

And who should
come knocking but

**JOE
CAPOBIANCO**

Right here on the cover:

TONI MOORE

steps out into the world
with her first exhibition

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The needle has landed

p-mod

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

It normally starts like this – Gareth (Skin Deep Art Editor honcho): “Have you written your editorial yet?”

Me: “Not yet – I’ve written about three now but I’ve thrown them all away. I keep changing my mind about what to write about.”

And so it goes, every single issue. Until this month, when we had the same conversation but Gaz (that’s what we like to call him, amongst other things, my favourite being ‘Mr 10-Minute Freeview’ – and if you’re laughing, you’re as guilty as he is) chose helpfully to say to me: “How about tattoos?” Which is just about the time that I thought he might be right. Most of the time, I go off on some tangent or other and bring some randomly related story into the equation to make it work.

Two minutes later though, I figured he could go pleasure himself in the nicest possible way, because if the other 99 pages of tattoo-related material in said tattoo magazine wasn’t enough for you, then we’re in a bad place. This is what I do. This is how I see the world in which we all converge occasionally. I could be critical and dig deep, but that’s what Paula does, and she does it well. I could take

the stance of ‘Man About The House’, but that’s what Mr Sweeney does. I much prefer to use some dumb-ass analogies that some people will get, and if you don’t, you can at least pretend. If we can’t have some fun out here on the coal face, what the hell’s the point?

Thus, my musings this month comes from an interview I did last night with the lovely Rahkee Shah (who some of you may know, and

ONCE YOU’VE SEEN WHAT’S POSSIBLE AND HOW MUCH BETTER THINGS CAN BE BY USING THE PAST TO GROW FROM, THERE’S NO GOING BACK

if you don’t you will next issue). A scheduling nightmare led us to do our interview in that most holy of venues... Starbucks in St Pancras station. I’ve done interviews in worse places, believe me. At one point we’re talking about how tattooing advances at a frightening pace these days and how some are being not so much left behind by it, but are just not keeping up... and that’s fine. You do what you can do to the best of your ability. From some dark corner in my head, I comparatively said something stupid like “we were all quite happy watching re-runs of *The Sweeney* and *The Professionals* on TV and then,

BANG! 24 and *Lost* came along and the world was changed forever.” And it’s true – once you’ve seen what’s possible and how much better things can be by using the past to grow from, there’s no going back. That’s not to say that you can’t still really be into what came before and appreciate it for what it was, but to ignore the way the tide flows is just burying your head in the sand.

When I listened back to

make sure we had it all, I found a conversation in the background on the tape (well, digital recording, but that sounds wrong) in which some guy is trying to get a coffee out of the girl behind the counter when he has obviously not ordered or paid for it. He walked into the joint, sat down at the ‘get your coffee here’ end and started being quite abusive about his imaginary drink. Which is probably all part of the deal when you work at what’s probably the busiest train station in London on the day the Paralympics began. But it makes you wonder. Well, it makes me wonder. I sat there and I thought to myself:

“Right there. Live and in front of my eyes – that’s this guy’s actual life. What the fuck?”

Now, somewhere in amongst all of this are some good life lessons. In case you missed them, here they are again. 1: Don’t ever tell anybody you think the ten-minute freeview on the adult channel is great. You’ll never live it down. Babestation is far superior. 2: Despite things moving on, any episode of the *The Sweeney* is better than the final episode of *Lost*, but life is a journey, not a destination. 3: Saying ‘life is a journey and not a destination’ is crass. Remind me not to use it again. 4: Don’t be a dick when you want a coffee. It’s just coffee. 5: Tattoos rock. Hard.

I think that covers everything...



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ARTIST PROFILES

24 SCOTT MOVE
The internet, amongst a heave of pros and cons, has one particular standout pro; the freedom to trawl through a ton of mediocrity and be blessed with uncovering a real gem. That was how it was with the discovery of Scott Move.

32 SHODAI HOKUO
Shodai Hokuo is one of the top artists of Japanese style work. Based out of Kobe, his work is incredibly meticulous and realistic – the detail in his work gives the piece an almost photographic quality and shows his absolute mastery at tebori-style tattooing.

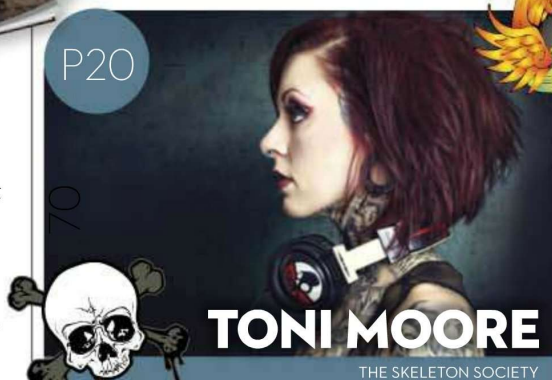


THIS MONTH'S PULL OUT:
BEAUTIFUL CREATURES

56 STEFANO ALCANTARA
Nobody can deny the fistfuls of talent that Paul Booth has brought to the table over the years. Currently treading the boards at the Last Rites Tattoo Theatre and touring the US until there's no stone left unturned, is Stefano Alcantara...

64 POOCH
The annual visits to Disneyworld as a kid conspired to make him fall in love with theme parks, not for the speed and excitement, but for the art. Today

P20



the American artist and tattooist, Pooch, mixes Walt Disney with H.R. Giger to create his own Coney Island on canvas.

70 JOE CAPOBIANCO
Once you've worked in the industry for two decades, created your own pin-up girl style, owned a studio

for nearly a decade, released three books, two DVDs and your own tattoo machine, you really need no introduction...

SPECIAL FEATURES

12 BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
This issue, Dawnii

POOCH
THEME PARK DOG

Fantana shows us where the magic happens.

20 TONI MOORE
Fresh from a little exhibition all of her own making, we got our paws on a great shoot with one of the most talented young guns in the UK today.

76 COREY TAYLOR/SLIPKNOT
The man who occasionally has no face, reveals some of the stories behind the ink in his skin. We call that a coup!

82 INK N IRON
Scenes from California's Ink-N-Iron this year.



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Sleeve Notes

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ALL SUBMISSIONS TO SLEEVE NOTES GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. BE IT NEWS, AN EVENT, NEW MERCH, A STUDIO MOVE... WE'LL DO OUR VERY BEST TO LET EVERYBODY ELSE KNOW ABOUT IT TOO. EMAIL: EDITOR@SKINDEEP.CO.UK OR IF YOU WANT TO BE ARCHAIC ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR: SKIN DEEP, 1 MARCHER COURT, SEALAND ROAD, CHESTER CH1 6BS. BRING IT.

SHORT SLEEVES



NINE TATTOO

Ouka from Rat Skill Tattoo, Okayama, Japan will be guesting with Nine Tattoo on October 24-27 and 30 this year. For all initial enquiries, please contact the studio on 01273 208844/inkme@nineboycesstreet.com or www.facebook.com/ratskill.ouka – and later, Patrick Mcfarlane will be guesting there on 21-23 November 2012. For all initial enquiries, please email Patrick directly at the following address: ape72patch1@gmail.com or www.patrickmcfarlane.com. Nine, 9 Boyces Street, Brighton. www.nineboycesstreet.com

PAUL NAYLOR

This was complicated for Paul to tell us, never mind us letting you all know about it. Thus, in his own words: "Just an update on my bookings. I've had a pretty unprecedented amount of requests for appointments which I've been struggling to get on top of. I didn't realise how complex it would get trying to book work in for five-plus studios. Therefore, I know it's a pain, but I'm handing bookings directly over to the studios I'll be working in. If you are already booked in, it's fine, but if you are waiting to hear back from me, please contact the studio you wish to get tattooed in directly for dates, bookings and deposit info.

For bookings at: Real Art Tattoo: tel 0116 260 0555 • Wildstyle Tattoo: tel 01423 869 660 • Stained Class Tattoo: 01743 469 552 • Maneki Neko (Formerly Powerhouse Tattoo): 01606 352022. The studios will liaise with me about designs, etc. I will still be booking personally for my time at Triple Six tattoo and for conventions."

Normal service may now be resumed...



DIESEL VS INK

Most people don't have a tattoo on their wrist (do people still do that?), but Diesel is about to launch something a little bit cool. Diesel, along with the irreverent and controversial tattoo artist, Mr. Cartoon, have collaborated to create two customised limited edition watches. Drawing inspiration from the vibrant streets of Los Angeles where he grew up, Mark Machado – more commonly known as Cartoon – is a master of fine line, richly detailed, hand-rendered designs and is well known for his murals, album covers, logos and celebrity tattoos. This first artistic collaboration for Diesel Timeframes has resulted in two distinctive models. If you absolutely must get your paws on one – after all Christmas is little more than a few months away now – you can order them here: dieseltimeframes.com.

FLORENCE & THE MACHINE (II)

The guys holding the keys to the magical door that is the Florence Tattoo Convention (2-4 November) have given us five pairs of tickets to give away to Skin Deep readers. With a fantastic artist list on the cards, we ask you: what the hell else are you doing in early November, aside from shopping for jumpers? No tough questions, just send me an email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line FLORENCE and we'll see what we can do. Check it all out here: florencetattooconvention.com

5th FLORENCE TATTOO CONVENTION 2012



SHORT SLEEVES

POWERHOUSE

Talking of which (which we were if you read the previous section), by the time you read this, Lisa Toye will be holding the reins at Powerhouse where (and we quote) "the new name is going to be Maneki Neko, myself along with Stephie Everitt will be the resident artists, and Paul Naylor will still be visiting us frequently." I hope you're still paying attention.



CRAZY MONKEY

I think we blew this mention last month somehow, so here you go again in case you were dumb enough to believe us: Crazy Monkey is an ultra-modern professional tattoo studio which is fully licensed with the Local Health Authority and boasts the highest standards of hygiene. It has a relaxed atmosphere with staff both friendly and helpful. Crazy Monkey is the home of European artist, Lukasz, and accredited artist, Daz B. The Studio offers a relaxed waiting area with Large LCD TVs, free tea and coffee, free wi-fi and free car parking. The studio has thousands of tattoo designs to choose from or they can design you a unique one off custom piece. They also offer tattoo laser removal by their fully trained laser technician, Pauline, using the state of the art laser technology. The studio also has excellent wheelchair access and has full disabled facilities. You can find Crazy Monkey Tattoo Studio in Aston Fields, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. Visit www.crazymonkeytattoostudio.co.uk or telephone 07926 490785.

COVER'D

Cover'd Tattoo Studio has moved on to bigger and better things! Vug, Antony, Leah, Fleur, James and Lou are now being joined by Matt Butler in the great new studio. Three floors of art work and tattoo stations for all seven artists. You can find the biggest studio in Exeter at: 62 South Street, Exeter, EX1 1EE • Tel: 01392 493377 • www.facebook.com/CoverdTattoos.



RANDOM READER

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MONTH

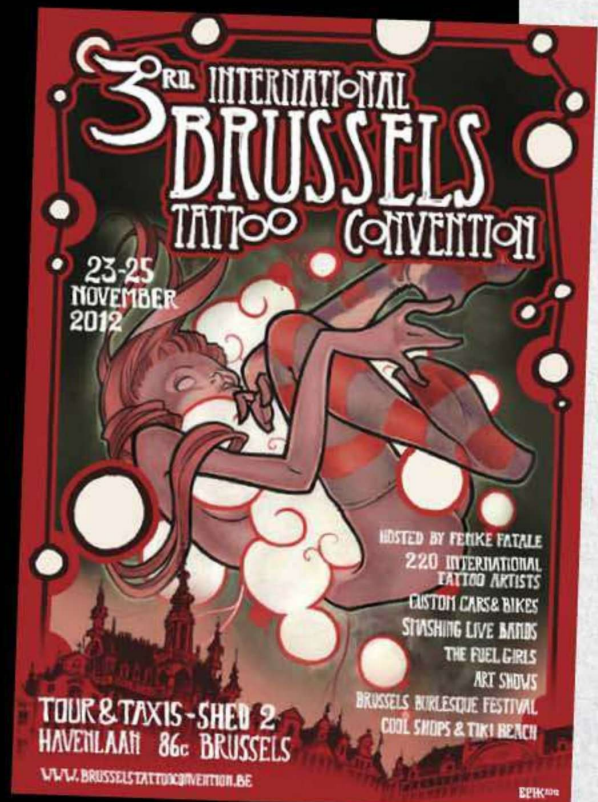
This month's photo hit comes from the lens of Matt Hillier: "This photo was taken of tattooer, Jack Newton, at Angelic Hell, Brighton, whilst he was setting up to work on fellow Brighton tattooer, Adrian Willard. I was doing some photos of Jack for my portfolio of personal work. This image stood out for me as the tight crop was something a little different to the usual tattooist working type images you usually see, but still manages to tell a lot of the story of what is going to happen."

You can check out a hell of a lot more of Matt's work here: matt-hillier.co.uk or here: flickr.com/photos/matthillierphoto.

From next month, we'll be entering into a little cross-promotion with our friends at Kraken Black Spiced Rum. You did indeed read that correctly: over the next few months, for every Random Reader Photograph that we publish, we'll also be giving away a bottle of the very finest rum we have ever come across. Even the Kraken illustration on their branding is up there in the heavens - check them out at krakenrum.com. Which means the rules will become just a little more strict in that you'll need to be over 18 to submit. That's all though - get shooting and let's start seeing some magic around here.

LET'S GO TO BRUSSELS

Well, not all of us, although that would be nice. We've got 20 pairs of tickets to giveaway for the Brussels International show (23-25 November) and there's not even a question to ask! It's as simple as the first 20 out of the proverbial hat will be handed over a pair of tickets - sure you have to make your own way there, but what do you want? Blood? It looks like an absolute blast with a fantastic artist list. All you need to know is here: brusselstattooconvention.be. To enter, simply send an email with the subject line of BRUSSELS to editor@skindeep.co.uk.



THE BLOGOSPHERE

SURF'S UP!

What can I tell you, the summer eventually came (and at time of writing it's still with us) which means at least a few days out of the loop. For me, that normally consists of a beach with a phone reception so bad it's not even worth checking – not that I don't love y'all or anything

Anyway, what should I find out here, but Jay Alders and his ever-increasing collection of tattoos of his own artwork – on others, not himself... obviously. When in Rome, grab a stick and conduct an interview in the sand...

How did the tattoo collection start? Did somebody mail you one, you dropped it online and it was eventually followed by the others?

Yeah, people just started connecting with different pieces of mine as I finished them and tatt's started trickling into my inbox ever since.

Are they good? And by that I mean, has the tattoo artist seriously looked at how you painted the original in order to recreate it?

Yes, totally. Some of them are really mind-blowing with the inking techniques that were used. It's interesting for me to see with each new tattoo how much personal creativity the tattoo artist and recipients of the ink take with my work. Some have been quite literal and very well executed.

Is it strange seeing them like this? When I've spoken to others in a similar situation, the first one is always followed by 'why would somebody do this with my work?' followed by feeling quite honoured.

It's been a huge honour to have my artwork immortalised on fans' bodies with such commitment. Each one stokes me out beyond belief. I put a lot of passion and integrity into my paintings, so the idea is to have people connect with it and have a sense of ownership of the image. So it's a feeling of total gratitude for me.

Is there enough respect in the tattoo community that they ask your permission before they do it?

Often people will ask me on Facebook or send over an email. It's not something

I feel I need to give approval for, but it's a sign of respect and I admire and appreciate that.

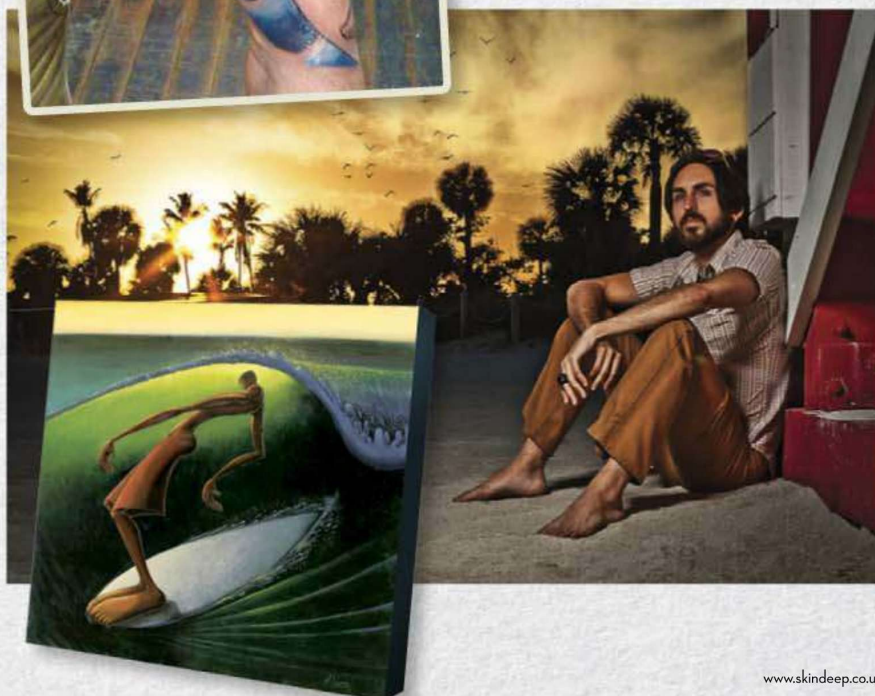
... and finally, this is your opportunity to pimp yourself for a couple of sentences – what's going on in your world at the moment? Exhibitions? Hard work? Or downing tools for the summer?

I think you caught me in one of the busiest times I've had with my career. I've been working on new paintings



which I'm really amped on and moving into a new studio near the beach. On the business side of things, we've been preparing for the launch of new apparel, merch, new website, and even a line of custom jewellery; I have also partnered up with some solid companies to release my first sexy swimsuit for the ladies and line of iPhone cases. I have some other collaborations and events in the works, but they're still in the works.

Check out more of Jay's artwork, prints and merchandise on: www.JayAlders.com.



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Conventions

All details correct at time of going to press.

PAUL SWEENEY



SWEET DREAMS

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The Assembly, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire
www.femaletattooshow.co.uk



October 12-14

TATTOO JAM

Doncaster Racecourse,
 Doncaster, South Yorkshire
www.tattoojam.com

October 27-28

HALLOWEEN TATTOO BASH

The Coal Exchange, Cardiff
www.facebook.com/halloweentattoobash

November 17-18

EAST COAST TATTOO EXPO

Highfields Holiday Park, Clacton, Essex
www.eastcoastexpo.co.uk
redsonya6@mac.com



January 13, 2013

TATTOO FREEZE

Telford International
 Centre, Shropshire

www.tattoofreeze.com

June 9, 2013

READING TATTOO SHOW

Rivermead Leisure Centre, Reading, Berkshire
www.readingtattooshow.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL

October 5-7

INDIA TATTOO CONVENTION

Rajhans Convention Centre, Surajkund,
 Faridabad, India
www.indiatattooconvention.com

October 6-7

ST GALLEN INTERNATIONAL TATTOO CONVENTION

Fürstenlandsaal, 9200 Gossau, Switzerland
www.tattoo-convention-sg.ch

October 19-21

EVIAN TATTOO SHOW

Palais Festivites, Evian, France
www.eviantattoo.com

November 23-25

BRUSSELS TATTOO CONVENTION

Tours & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium
www.brusselstattooconvention.be

November 24-25

NEW ZEALAND TATTOO & ART FESTIVAL

New Plymouth, New Zealand
www.nzattooart.com

December 7-9

BERLIN TATTOO CONVENTION

Arena Berlin, Eichen Strasse 4, 12435 Berlin
www.tattoo-convention.de

The other night I dreamt I was riding bareback, at sunset, across a sandy beach, atop a golden horse named Douglas...

Douglas was less of the reflective yellow gold commonly associated with precious metal gold bars, and far more comparable to the yellow gold of a McVitie's Gold Bar, of the biscuit variety. Fearlessly, Douglas and I galloped majestically beyond the horizon in hot pursuit of the ever-diminishing sunlight. But the longer we galloped and the hotter we pursued, the more tired Douglas and I became until, eventually, we found ourselves consumed by our own blind ambition, as well as the deep blue darkness of the night sky. With only the faint silvery hue from the moonlit sky to guide our way, exhausted, we collapsed together.

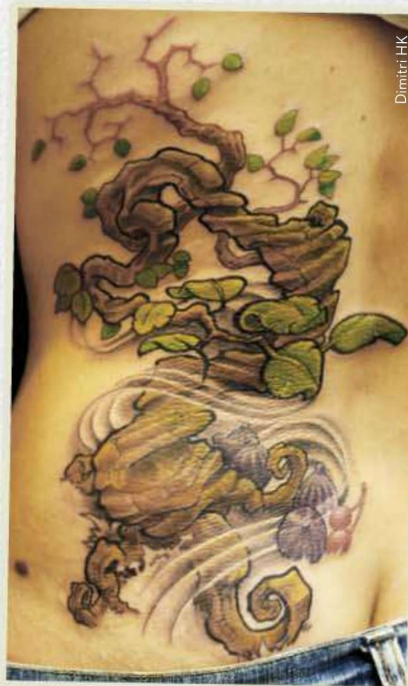
Sensing my defeat, Douglas compassionately lent me his ear, which I gratefully chewed upon, literally; it turned out that Douglas was actually made entirely out of McVitie's Gold Bar chocolate biscuit!

Weakened by the weight of my own defeat and overcome by my addiction to McVitie's Gold Bars, before I knew it I'd devoured Douglas, leaving only a few crumbs that were indistinguishable from the grains of sand around me; "Damn you Douglas!" I screamed. "You were the best (tastiest) friend a man could ever have, and now you're gone, gone, gone! I will make it my life's ambition to tell the people of the world (readers of Skin Deep

magazine) of your phenomenal self sacrifice... your life shall not be taken in vain!"

I'm not going to pretend I have any idea of what that dream symbolised... but I'm sure I could happily hypothesise over various figurative correlations between the role of Douglas and my real relationships (chill out! I've never eaten any of my friends and nor do I ever intend to!).

Those of you who've gained some small insight into my absurd existence over the course of the last seven articles are more than aware of my ability to make something out of nothing. But this month I embark on making nothing out of something, as I experience my first ever tattoo removal... "BRING ON THE LASERS!" All joking aside, I will be carefully documenting the whole 'Bond villain torture experience' for your reading/viewing pleasure – iPad subscribers will also be able to



YOU WERE THE BEST (TASTIEST)
 FRIEND A MAN COULD EVER
 HAVE, AND NOW YOU'RE
 GONE, GONE, GONE!

watch the first treatment from start to finish. (And I shall be there to report/ laugh. Delete as applicable. Ed.)

Over the next few months it is my aim to give you the most insightful report possible. No 'manning up' – if it hurts you'll hear it; if it burns, you'll know; if it itches, I'll let you know how much and how long for. We've all made mistakes, but redemption is no longer reserved for the 'holier than thou'.

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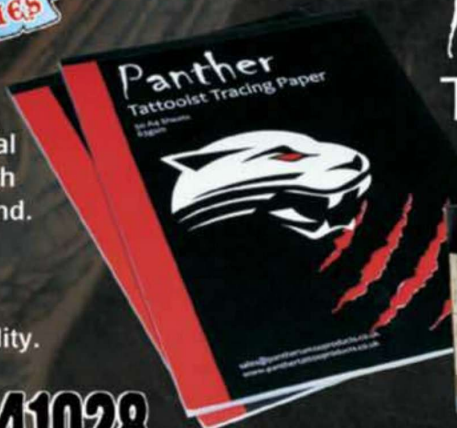
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BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

In part three of our ongoing series looking at what tattoo artists do when they're not tattooing, this month we figured it would be fun to press our faces against the glass at Painted Lady

"My name is Dawnii Fantana. I'm a tattooist in Birmingham, UK. I've been tattooing for around ten years and have had my own studio, Painted Lady Tattoo Parlour, for four years. Like so many tattoo artists, my job pretty much consumes my life – I eat, sleep and breath tattooing, and when I'm not... then it's all about the art! I'm happiest when I'm painting and drawing.

"With tattooing taking priority and as a custom artist, I always have designs to draw up, so it's difficult to find time for my art. But lately I've made a conscious effort to dedicate more time to it, and have launched a shop selling my artwork, driving me to stay prolific.

"Most of my work is in acrylic, but I enjoy all mediums and like to mix them up; painting allows me the freedom to experiment that I miss in tattooing."

Being the top sport that she is, Dawnii has also given a pair of limited edition mounted prints to give away – that would be the matching pair of retro boxers that you see here. If you're sitting there thinking just how much of a great addition they'd make to your wall, as usual, it couldn't be much easier than dropping a blank email to editor@skindeep.co.uk with the subject line 'Painted Lady'. We'll do the rest. Meantime – simply enjoy the fruits of somebody else's labour... 🌹







Amsterdam's famous canals.

AMSTERDAM OR BUST



A lot of artists I have met in Europe get very excited when they talk about the Amsterdam tattoo convention, really hyping it up. So it has been one of the shows I've been looking forward to the most this year, combined with the fact I have never visited Amsterdam before and I'll get the chance to visit the tattoo museum here as well



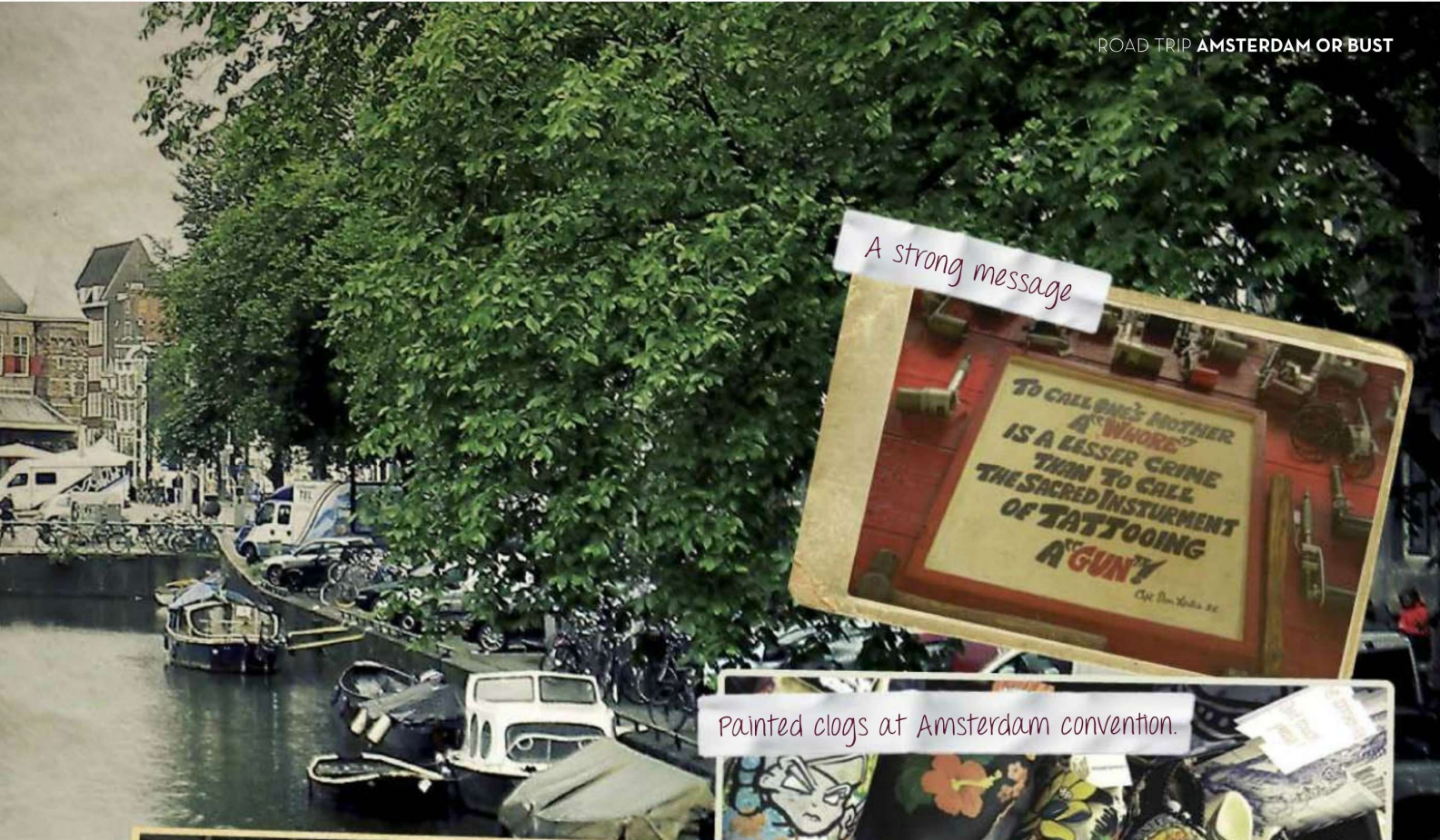
cigars, whiskey and other tipples, and it certainly gets me in the mood for the start of the weekend. I leave rather dapper, but can't help feeling I need a smoking jacket for my next visit.

We arrive in Amsterdam on Friday and set up. As I walk around, I see there are some great artists working the show, Jondix and Deno are sharing a double booth and I am wedged in between Patrick Huttlinger, who is working on some amazing dot work designs, and Kel Violet, whom I worked with many years ago in West London. Friday rolls along and while there are plenty of great artists in attendance, sadly the general public are rather thin on the ground.

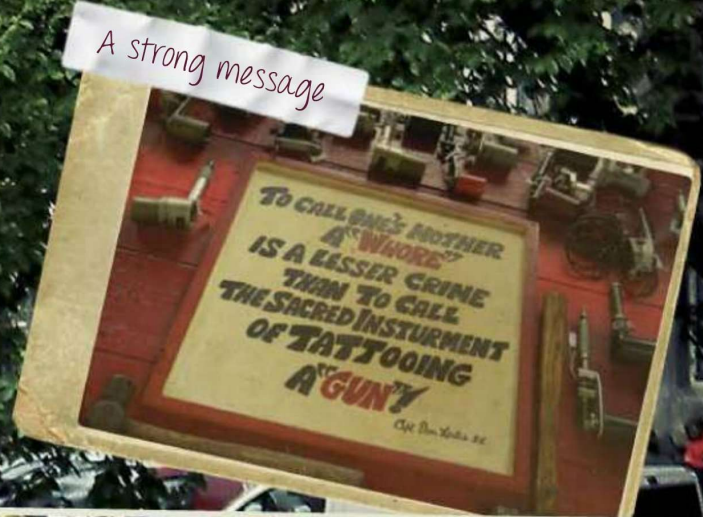


On the way to Amsterdam, I made a quick stop in Rotterdam to visit Schorem Barbers – or 'scumbags' as it translates to English. The guys cut my hair at the Rotterdam tattoo convention and told me all about their old time barber shop in the city, so I thought it worth a stop for a look and a cut. The shop did not disappoint! Walking in feels like stepping back in time to a slower pace of life; blues, jazz and rockabilly music flows from

the stereo speakers and the walls are decorated with taxidermy animal heads, old photos, paintings and art prints from various tattoo artists. The barbers themselves dress in waistcoats and ties with neck tattoos and sleeves poking out from their collars and cuffs. I sit down, get handed a cold beer and feel as if I am in a gentlemen's club – women are not allowed in the shop, like, not at all... there is even a sign! Regular customers have their own cabinets which are filled with



A strong message



Painted clogs at Amsterdam convention.



Stepping back in time at Schorem.

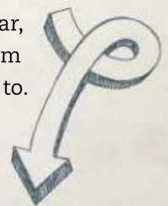
All the artists were given a wooden clog to paint on arrival, which will go into the competition on Sunday before being auctioned off for charity. It also keeps many artists busy while they are not tattooing. After the convention we wander into town to experience Amsterdam by night. I'm not a smoker so the cafe's did not really interest me, but I am also not a prude, so we visit the red light district to see it in all its neon glory. The place is extremely busy, full of tourists and drunk blokes on stag nights transforming the cute buildings and canals we saw by day into a 'Euro Trash' theme park for adults at night.

Saturday and Sunday roll along and sadly the show doesn't get much busier; friends of mine from Germany are quite baffled as they do the show every year and reminisce about busier shows in the past. It was nice sunny weather, so maybe everyone headed away for the weekend, or maybe everyone was just too stoned to take interest in an exhibition hall full of tattoo artists. Sadly hype and expectations can be a dangerous thing and I leave slightly disappointed. Maybe my hopes were too high or maybe I have

BLUES, JAZZ AND ROCKABILLY MUSIC FLOWS FROM THE STEREO SPEAKERS AND THE WALLS ARE DECORATED WITH TAXIDERMY ANIMAL HEADS, OLD PHOTOS, PAINTINGS AND ART PRINTS FROM VARIOUS TATTOO ARTISTS

worked too many shows this year, but at least I have the Amsterdam Tattoo Museum to look forward to.

The museum houses Henk 'Hanky Panky' Schiffmacher's personal collections and has recently been re-opened in a new, larger building split over three floors. The main building has an art gallery that's currently exhibiting Alex Binnie's woodblock portraits; it's quite a feast for the eyes, portraying many artists from 🌸





YOU CAN EVEN SIT AND WAIT AT THE REPLICA BAR OF THE BRISTOL TATTOO CLUB BEFORE YOU GET SOME WORK FROM A VISITING GUEST ARTIST

Freddy Corbin and Fillip Leu to George Bone and Australia's Ali Manners. Alex is an extremely talented artist and for well over 20 years has produced amazing art as well as tattoos. The fact that he has managed to stay at the forefront of the art and be such an important figure in the UK tattoo industry for so long says a lot about the man. If you get the chance check out the exhibition then buy the book... you won't be disappointed.

As you enter the museum itself, many of tattoo's greatest greet you in the hall of fame, looking down from their traditionally painted Holland porcelain plates. It's truly brilliant. The first floor focuses on tattooing tribal history; there is an array of traditional hand tattoo equipment, photographs, mummified remains and other artifacts from the likes of New Zealand, Samoa, and all over the world. The second floor concentrates on Western tattooing; cases full of old tattoo machines, tattoo trunks, ancient-looking power packs, pigments and other equipment, as well as hand-painted signs, pictures and collectables from the likes of Les Skuse, Cindy Ray and countless other artists who have made their



Seb sero painting his winning clog.



Some of Alex Binnie's woodblock series.



Inside the tattoo museum.



Tattoo artifacts from India.

mark over the last 100 years or so. You can even sit and wait at the replica bar of the Bristol Tattoo Club before you get some work from a visiting guest artist working in a booth in the museum.

Finally, on the top floor is 'The Tatican' – a working tattoo studio with guest artists from all over the world, and a room exclusively for hand tattoos with a raised platform, which is beautiful. If you are in Amsterdam, it's well worth a visit. The cases and displays are put together with a lot of care, and the display cards are informative but not boring – it certainly taught me more about my art form, and so I will leave you with this fact... 'Britain: first documented by the Romans, who described a headhunting people tattooed in blue. The word 'Britain' is said to have derived from the Celtic and means 'the land of the painted people'.'

Even today you can say that in Great Britain the tattoo rules the waves! 🌊

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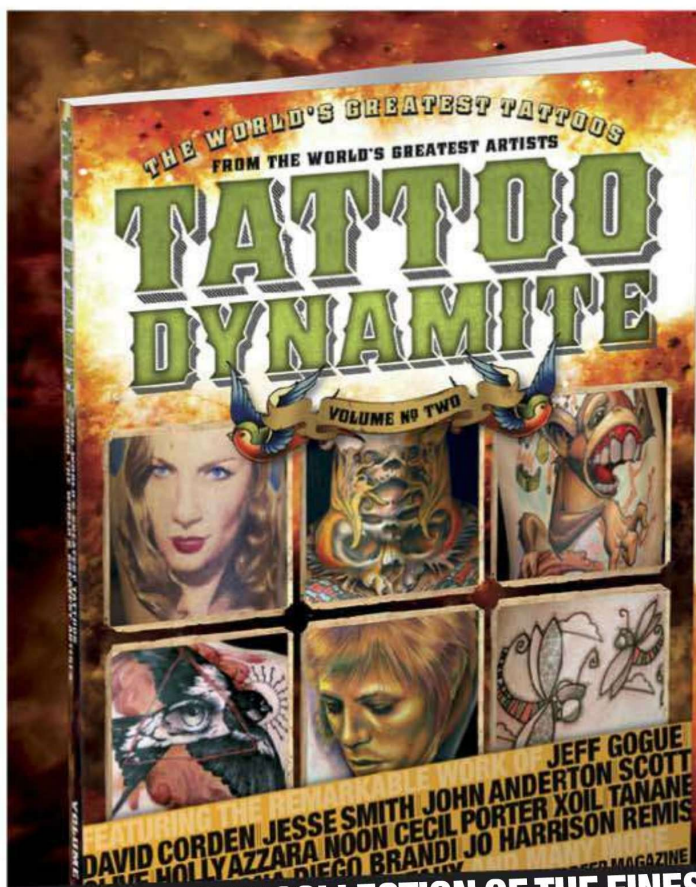
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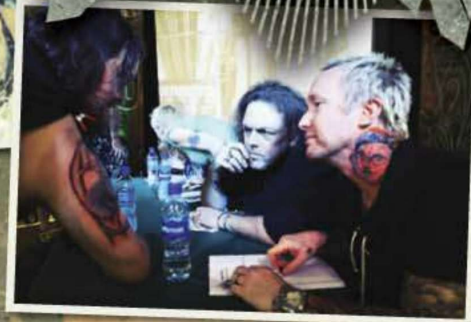
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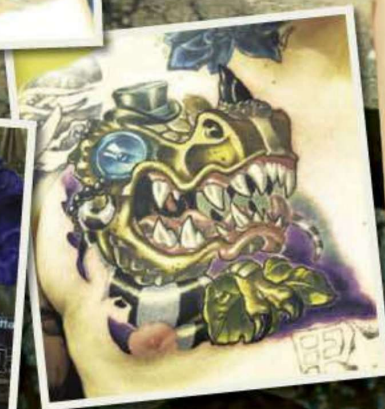
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the skeleton society

Toni Moore is fast becoming one of the most recognisable faces out there for great tattoo work. Our man Scott Cole happened to be passing by at quite an opportune moment and returned with the swag you see here before you



It's always quite a big deal when a tattoo artist gets hit by the idea that they should host their own art show – in this case, it was long overdue. With Toni's work mounting up behind her and a good buzz in the community, what eventually came to pass was a collection of paintings and drawings at Walcot Chapel, Bath, as Toni's first exhibition ran in a 'for one week only' slot. And with the results being better than even she expected, we can certainly be

hopeful for more just like this in the future.

With Toni already having achieved much that most would want to achieve during a full tattoo career – being featured in magazines, working top tattoo shows and working with some of the best in the business – she is determined to simply keep climbing. Many believe that women hold the key to the future of the art by racing ahead with great ideas and overtaking the established,

possibly jaded, elements of tattoo art with new, fresh ideas that only women could bring. If that really is the case, then Toni is just the woman to watch. 🍷

As an artist, you always want to
* push yourself further, feeling
that you are not doing as well as
* the next person *



* I wanted to do the exhibition to show people
it's not just tattooing that I love. Tattoos are just
another medium to work with, and people may,
hopefully, like my artwork too. Art is a passion
and I want to share it with the community
that has supported me in everything I do *



For now though, we'll leave her to bask in her self-created sun and this great shoot from the lens of Mr Cole. Lap it up children!

You can keep up with Toni's regular blog over at skeletonsocietyblog.blogspot.co.uk. And of course, lest we forget, you can always get yourself booked in for tattooing at broadstreetstudio.co.uk. Finally, if you want to get in touch with Ms Moore yourself – you can reach her right here: tonitattoo@hotmail.co.uk.



"The skull was sourced from Barber DTS and was painted with acrylic – it looks awesome in the shop. When people are sitting around for four or five hours they notice new pieces; I like that we have new pieces going up all the time – I think it's important." – Toni



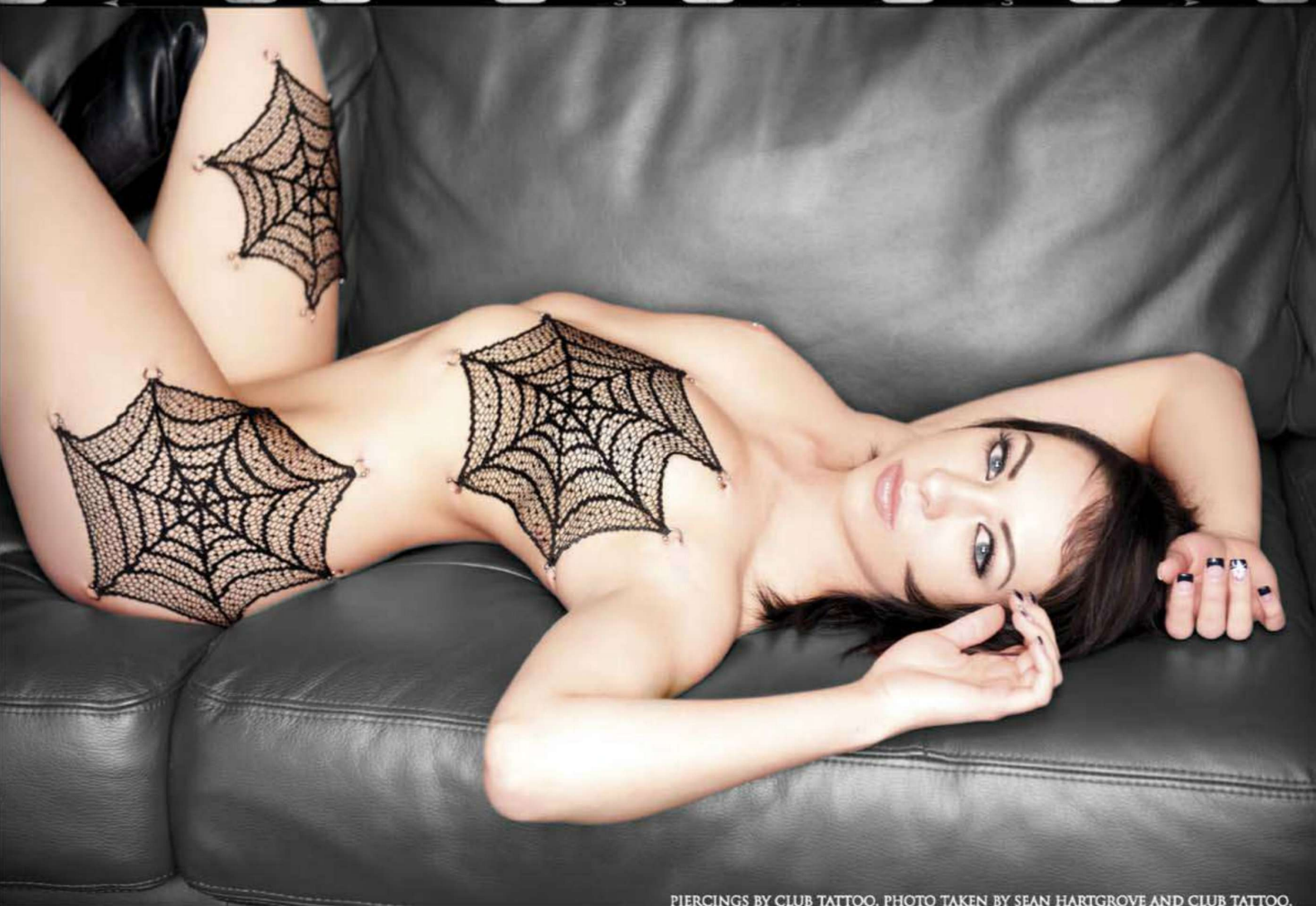
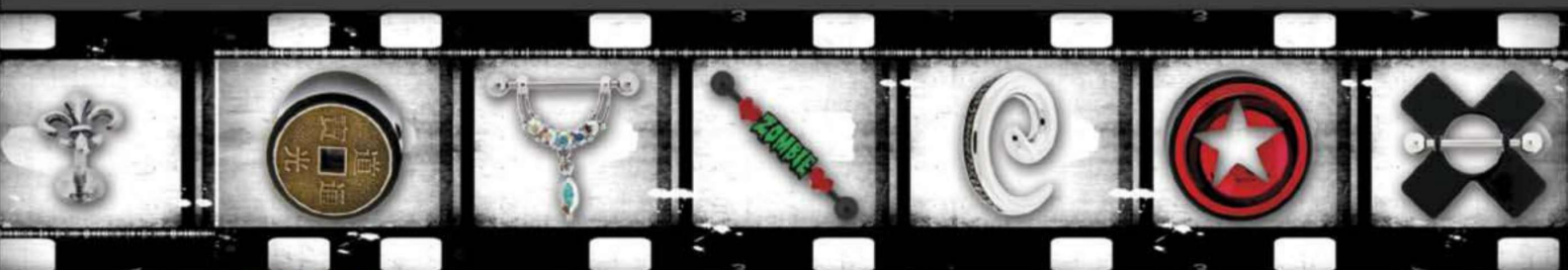
"I definitely think that doing artwork outside of tattooing has benefited my work; you learn more about what colours work well together, explore different references and develop your own style. People can see what kind of things you like to do as well. I am now posting more of my own personal artwork online which customers are now requesting to have tattooed on them, which is awesome." – Toni



"My Dad loves all the tattoo scene. He used to hate it – he has had a massive about-turn. He got tattooed when he was a lot younger; I think his tattoos are awesome, but he hates them. I think he thought it was going to be all the same and that I was going to regret them, that I might just go down the local shop and get some little tweety bird on my boob or something!" – Toni



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MOVE ON

The internet, amongst a heave of pros and cons, has one particular standout pro – the freedom to trawl through a ton of mediocrity and be blessed by uncovering a real gem. That was how it was for me with my discovery of Scott Move



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Generally when I'm so immediately taken with something I get suspicious. Usually it's the slow-burners that last for me. But it was different this time. I was taken immediately, and then with each look at his artwork and tattoos, I only became more and more fascinated with them. Rather than losing that initial excitement, instead I became increasingly interested and knew I had to seek out the man behind the art. And so I did, and my interview with him is what follows...

"I'm 36 years old. I'm from Chelmsford in Essex; a small village in the countryside. I studied art very casually at school, then at college, followed by a short stint

at university in Northampton. But to be honest I didn't learn anything there at all. I kind of fucked that one up. Everything I learnt I learnt from my mum when I was about six. She is a painter. I learnt about shading and how to draw negative space. That's as far as the education goes. My dad can draw better with his feet than he can with his hands! He's more of a business-minded person. My brother and sister don't draw, so the artistic side was really my mum and I – she does watercolours. I would be in my room, watching *Terrahawks*, and I'd be drawing pictures of people with knives stuck in them; lots of blood. I'd watch *Conan* and stuff like that. My mum always

asked me, 'why can't you draw nice things?' and I was just like, 'I don't know, mum'. And I still don't know to this day why I do.

"When I went to university, I had no real desire to be there. It was just to keep my parents off my back, so I went along with it. I left home and got drunk every day and didn't really go to any classes. Eventually I left because that obviously wasn't going to work. I came back, I wasn't really doing anything. I didn't really care about art at the time and I ended up getting a job on a building site for ten years, which was a huge waste of time. So I didn't draw for a pretty long time. Most of the time I was on the building site I didn't draw. But I was in and out of bands for a while, and I was asked if I could draw a T-shirt design. Other people didn't want to draw it because it was a guy stamping on a policeman's head, but I was happy to. I drew it, they



I WOULD BE IN MY ROOM, WATCHING TERRAHAWKS, AND I'D BE DRAWING PICTURES OF PEOPLE WITH KNIVES STUCK IN THEM; LOTS OF BLOOD. I'D WATCH CONAN AND STUFF LIKE THAT. MY MUM ALWAYS ASKED ME, 'WHY CAN'T YOU DRAW NICE THINGS?'

sold a bunch, and that was the thing that brought my interest in art back. It was around the time that the internet was becoming this great tool for finding out about other artists, and seeing what people were doing.

"Music has always been a big influence. I've always been listening to punk-rock and stuff like that. Eversince I saw a skateboard video at Primary school; from then on I was always listening to the soundtrack of skate videos. Being in bands, playing punk and hardcore throughout my teenage years, was obviously a big influence as well. It definitely affected the way that I was drawing. I got tattooed the first time when I was about 17 in a really small and awful tattoo shop. It was a terrifying experience that I didn't like at all. Back then I never thought it would turn out to be something that I'd be interested in, but my friend Jim 🍌

had loads of tattoos and I thought he looked really cool. But back then it was just about being cool; it certainly wasn't an artistic interest I had in tattooing. I didn't know anything about tattoos back then.

"I think it was when I was in a band and we started to play in London where my interest in tattoos became a real thing. I started to get more tattoos; I realised you could get some really great stuff. So I was getting tattooed a lot before I even considered the fact that I might be able to do it myself. But then around the time that my drawing started to come back into play, I think I started to think that I may be able to tattoo.

"The thing with the hardcore scene back then was that if you got a tattoo you got a sleeve. Everyone

had sleeves. Nowadays people want to get palm-sized tattoos, rather than a Japanese sleeve like when I started; I didn't realise you could do anything else at the time, so that's what I did. People don't seem to get them so much these days. Dom Holmes did the Japanese sleeve; she works at The Family Business. I don't think I'd get it now because I'm aware now how quickly space runs out, so I probably would have saved my space for other tattoos by other artists... get palm-sized tattoos, so I can collect from as many artists as possible. But I didn't really think about it back then; I just wanted to get my sleeve and be cool like everyone else!

"My friend, Pete, who played in a band called Beatdown Fury and was also a tattoo artist, covered up my first tattoo that I

got on my stomach (which was a pretty brutal experience, I have to say). But he said, 'with your art stuff, you could be a tattoo artist and you could do well. You've got a good style of drawing and it's different, so you should go for it.' So one day I went around his house and he helped me. He tattooed me a little bit, and I tattooed him a little bit, and so on. It was just like a baptism of fire – it was literally one day. We set up some machines, and it was all good and it was all safe. I tattooed myself. It's quite weird tattooing yourself, but it's a lot of fun once you get into it. It's a good gauge whether it hurts too much, y'know? After that one day though, I still felt it was incredibly difficult and I'd probably never be able to do it. It was fun, but that was about it. I didn't think it would be a real career choice at that point.

"But it sparked my interest properly. From then I didn't pursue it for a little while. I was just working, socialising, being in a band; it seemed very far out of reach at that point. I think I stopped thinking about it for a while; I thought I'd just concentrate on drawing more at the time though. I spoke to a friend of mine, Josh, who lives in Baltimore. He told me that if I was to come to America he would apprentice me, which was awesome. He said I could come over for six months and he'd apprentice me and give me a place to stay, so I saved up a bunch of money for a year. He was guiding me via email what I should be doing before I even got any machines. But the weekend before I was supposed to go to America I got drunk on a stag do in Brighton, fell off a statue and broke my ankle... so that put an end to my America visit.

"I was back to square one and unable to walk. After that I still had the idea that I wanted to do it, but it seemed less and less likely that I'd be able to save up that amount of money again. But it wasn't an option anymore anyway, because he had moved shops and would be unable to

THE WEEKEND BEFORE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO TO AMERICA I GOT DRUNK ON A STAG DO IN BRIGHTON, FELL OF A STATUE AND BROKE MY ANKLE... SO THAT PUT AN END TO MY AMERICA VISIT





apprentice me from there. Some time later, I finally got around to buying a few machines and started to tattoo myself. I was just buying stuff online; tattooing myself with guidance through email/ text messages/ phone calls, and just going for it. I had some help from my friend, Alex Young, who was learning at the same time. He showed me how to set up machines and I just did a couple on my legs until there was no more room... so I progressed onto friends. I didn't have an apprenticeship or anything like that, it was never an option. I didn't have the amount of time that I could possibly give up to do that. The more I went along, the more important it became to learn as much as I could.

"At that point I was introduced to Allan Graves who works at Haunted. We were talking about an art exhibition (at this point my drawings had a following, mainly thanks to the internet, and I was doing a lot of commission work) and I also brought up the fact that

I was learning how to tattoo, but I wanted more help. He invited me to come in every Friday and hang out, to ask questions and just to watch. I needed a proper space; it wasn't ideal tattooing at home anymore. I wasn't charging any money at home anyway, I was just tattooing friends. I'd take photos and show people what I'd done. I said to Allan that I had a lot of people that want the tattoos that I'm doing, and I asked if I could bring them to the shop and do it there, and he said 'yes' to it. So that was great.

"At the time when I started, my girlfriend was about to have a baby. I think it was two days after he was born when I started to work there, so I just dropped the job at the building site, started working three days a week at Haunted and selling drawings the rest of the time. I had all my own customers from the get-go because of internet 'skills'! I'm always on the internet doing something; I'm on facebook all the time. People knew me already, so I had people coming in,

I'M STILL TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT MY STYLE IS AT THE MOMENT. I THINK I WORK A LOT WITH BLACK INK AT THE MOMENT BECAUSE THAT'S COME FROM MY DRAWING. JUST VERY RECENTLY I'VE STARTED TO ADD A LITTLE BIT OF COLOUR, BUT IT'S JUST BABY STEPS AT THE MOMENT

wanting my style. I didn't really have to do much walk-in stuff, but I did what I could handle. I just jumped straight in, and this was back this past February. If I'd been 18 years old and living at home with my parents, an apprenticeship would have happened. But I'd just had a baby, so I wasn't able to work for free. But I got on with it. I've had some particularly great advice from some people, and I've just tried to pick it up as best I can. I was at Haunted until two weeks ago.

"I just started tattooing at The Circle Tattoo in Soho. It was basically an offer I couldn't refuse. It's in Soho, filled with great artists – a great place that I could forward my craft – so I just took it. If I 🍌



WHEN I LOOK AT TATTOOS NOW I'M NOT
LOOKING AT THEM AS JUST AN IMAGE.
I'M LOOKING AT INDIVIDUAL LINES
AND SHADING; PICKING BITS OUT AND
TRYING TO SEE HOW THEY'RE DONE. IT'S
A LITTLE ANNOYING ACTUALLY

didn't take the offer now I'd regret it. It's a new studio that I can really get behind and help promote. It's all about learning for me. I work with a guy called Math who owns it and tattoos there, his business partner Ashley, Daniel Ronson tattoos there, El Bernardes and Dawid Gaura tattoo there, it's a pretty sweet team. There's laser removal there done by an awesome guy called Wayne too. And I live in North London so it's only about five stops away on the tube. It's a custom tattoo shop, but we do walk-ins as well. It's kind of a lifestyle thing; there's a

shop upstairs, there's a gallery, and downstairs is a huge tattoo studio.

"I'm still trying to find out what my style is at the moment. I think I work a lot with black ink at the moment because that's come from my drawing. Just very recently I've started to add a little bit of colour, but it's just baby steps at the moment. I know that tattooing is so difficult. Everything has to be done in very small stages, so I wanted to become comfortable using black first and won't start using colour properly until I know how to do it. I try and encourage people to maybe have a little bit of colour done too, even though everyone wants black from me. I just want to make tattoos that look like I did it; like my drawings. You can tell my favourite tattoo artist's tattoos a mile off, and I love that.

"One of my favourites at the moment is Ien Levin from the Ukraine. What a fantastic dude. I did a drawing trade with him; I was terrified. I posted a drawing to him and it took like three weeks to get there and I thought it had got lost. He's a really amazing tattooist. I saw his stuff years ago on the internet; I didn't know who it was or what I was looking at. We've become friends now though and it's really nice. You can look at one of his tattoos and you just know who it's been done by;

same with Liam Sparkes. There's people like Duncan X who have been quite a big influence. At the start a lot of people told me that my drawing style wouldn't transfer to tattooing, but it's only when I found people like Levin and Duncan X, that I realised that was bullshit. It transfers perfectly; what are you talking about?!

"When I look at tattoos now I'm not looking at them now as just an image. I'm looking at individual lines and shading; picking bits out and trying to see how they're done. It's a little annoying actually – it's like listening to music and only listening to the drum track! You lose sight of what you're really looking at. But it's really important to look at tattoos that way as a tattoo artist. The main thing is to look as much as possible and ask as many questions as possible."

As we drew to the close of what for me was a very exciting interview, Scott wanted to thank a few people who have both helped and inspired him. "I'd like to thank Alan Graves at Haunted, Alex Young, Simon Earl, Josh Hart in America. Obviously Math and Ashley at The Circle Tattoo for giving me the chance. And to you for hooking me up with this; it's very kind!" 🐾

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MASTER OF LIGHT

Shodai Hokuo is one of the top artists of Japanese style work. Based in Kobe, his work is incredibly meticulous and realistic – the detail in his work creates an almost photographic quality and shows his absolute mastery at tebori-style tattooing



Perfectly balanced with delicate muted color usage, he is one of Japan's top irezumi artists, with technical skill that is nothing short of breathtaking. We go to Kobe city to meet with Hokuo – he has a vivacious energy and downtown friendliness that is true to the traditional tattooing spirit:

HOW DID YOU START?

My uncle was a horishi (Japanese tattoo artist) and actually, my mother had two brothers who were both horishi too. So after I graduated junior high school, I went in that direction; at 15 I

was studying tattooing, and at age 20 I started professionally. My teacher was actually my uncle, the younger brother of my mother.

WHEN WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU SAW A TATTOO?

When I was a child, I saw them at the public bath. It just seemed really bizarre, at the time I didn't really think it was cool or anything like that. As I grew older, I could see that dragons were cool, and some work is magnificent, but at the time I was just simply curious. Then gradually I came to know that my uncle was doing it as a job.

WHO WERE YOUR UNCLE'S CLIENTS AT THE TIME?

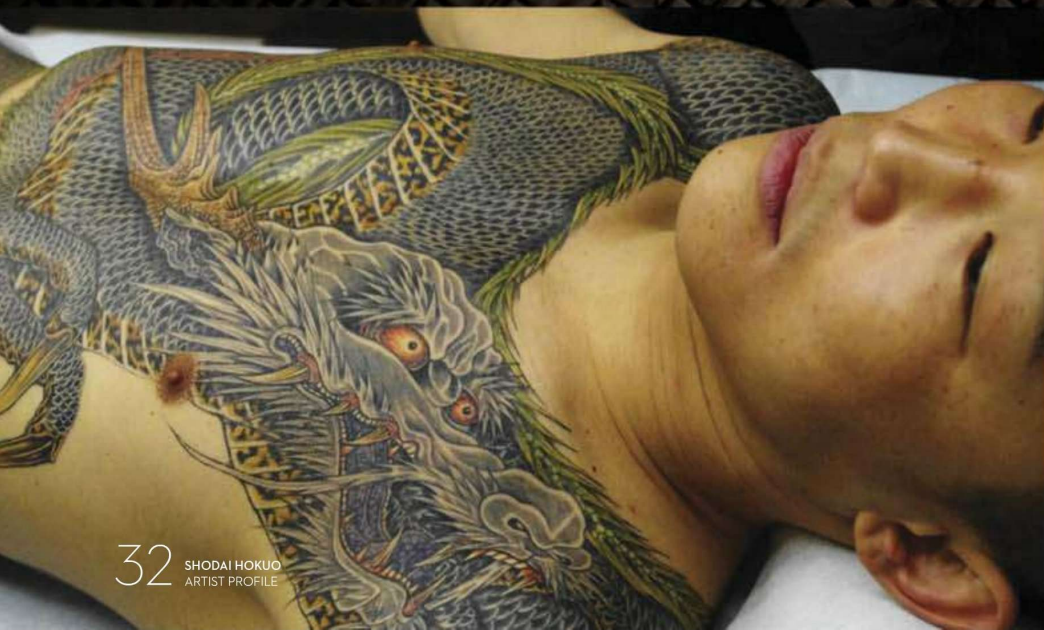
It was a long time ago, so it was predominantly Japanese mafia. In Japan they called the tattoos 'gaman', which means endurance. If you had a Japanese tattoo you were a man, it was a test of endurance. If you were a coward you would just have a small piece; if you were brave you would get a large piece.

DO THE YAKUZA GET THE TATTOO AS AN INITIATION RITE, OR AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE SYNDICATE FOR A WHILE?

After a while, the boss will tell them what motif they are to get, and usually it is similar to what the boss has; but back then the boss actually pays for the tattoo!

BUT SEEING AS TATTOOS ARE SO FASHIONABLE NOW, ARE THE YAKUZA STILL GETTING IREZUMI?

Yes, it still continues. They won't get (Western) tattoos, but it depends on how rich the family is. If they are rich, the boss will pay; if they are not, they have to pay for it themselves, so they can't get prolific work straight away.





HOW ABOUT DOWNTOWN CRAFTSMEN, DO YOU HAVE MANY CLIENTS THAT ARE ARTISANS?

Yes, carpenters and also firemen get them, that is part of the tradition. They get Japanese-style tattoos, especially a lot of human characters. My clients usually study the meanings first and then come in, rather than getting a piece because it looks cool. With young people there is no one getting tribal anymore.

WHEN YOU WERE A STUDENT, WHAT DID THAT ENTAIL?

I was living in the teacher's house and making all the meals – it was like I was his wife. For five years I would learn there, the first year I would learn how to grind the sumi – nowadays there is a machine that does it for you

IF YOU HAD A JAPANESE TATTOO YOU WERE A MAN, IT WAS A TEST OF ENDURANCE. IF YOU WERE A COWARD YOU WOULD JUST HAVE A SMALL PIECE; IF YOU WERE BRAVE YOU WOULD GET A LARGE PIECE

though. Then I would learn how to draw, and after three years I would practice on my own body. I was also doing things like making the needles. Then I would practice on my best friend, so it really takes five years to be professional. My teacher told me when it was time for me to debut and to become independent, so I have been working for 25 years. For the first ten years I had no idea what I was doing, it takes that long.

AT THE TIME, WERE YOU OPERATING OUT OF AN APARTMENT LIKE MOST TRADITIONAL TATTOO

MASTERS, OR WAS IT OUT OF A STREET-STYLE SHOP?

Nowadays, if you become professional, you work out of your teacher's shop and pay them back like that. But in my case there is a blood connection, so I would pay my teacher back in other ways, not necessarily monetary. So when I teach it is the same – I don't take money, but I am really strict. I'm probably really hated with the young artists, but I don't think what I'm saying is wrong! I just think they need to study and not make mistakes. 🌸

HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU MEET TATTOO ARTISTS THAT HAVE BECOME PROFESSIONAL AFTER A YEAR?

I think it is ludicrous! People that have been doing it for 25 years, when you talk to them, they know about the human anatomy, but people that haven't studied really don't know these things, and they are already taking money for their work. In the modern tattooing scene there are people like this, but I think they will always mess up somewhere, and rather than to make a mistake on a client, it's better to learn first. I think it is really important to know a lot about the human anatomy first.

WHEN DID YOU GO FROM THE APARTMENT TO THE SHOP?

Two years ago. At the time, all horishi were in apartments, but over the last ten years there have been a proliferation of shops, as a business strategy. They call in

other artists and get the money. But, conversely, by having a shop overseas clients can come – if it's a room in an apartment, they will be too scared to enter!

WHEN YOU GET YOUR OWN APPRENTICES, WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

They just knock on the door and ask. I teach them properly starting from the correct etiquette. If they seem OK I will take them, but basically I knock them back if they think they can become a horishi straight away. I'll take people that seem to have perseverance, it's all about the psychological aspects.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR CLIENTS?

Mostly word of mouth, but through magazines and the internet as well.

WERE YOU ALWAYS DOING JAPANESE TRADITIONAL?

Yes, I saw American tattoos in the magazines and I found it



really sensational, you can tattoo anything, and it's a tattoo. As a style, it's completely different. With Japanese tattoos, each one has a story and meaning. You can't just tattoo anything – if you don't tattoo things with meanings, it's a bit of a lie and I don't approve of it. When I was a student I really had to study the meanings behind the tattoos by reading books and asking my teacher, and you would have to tattoo according to the history.

WITH YOUR CLIENTS, DO THEY COME IN WANTING LARGE SCALE PIECES IN THE BEGINNING?

Yes, from the start. It's rare that they want 'one points' (small pieces), although I have few clients like this; if I get a one point client, it's usually a half sleeve.

WERE YOU ALWAYS DOING TEBORI?

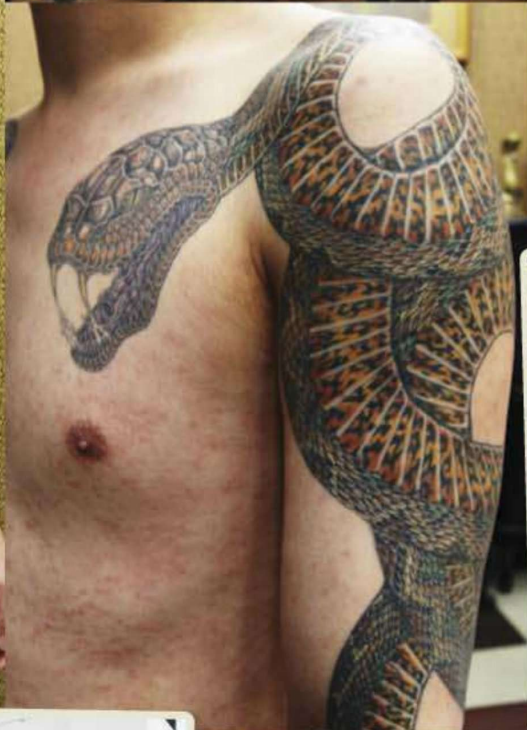
Yes, in the beginning I was doing the outlines with tebori as well. Then at 27 I started using a machine line as it's really fast and the outlines are beautiful. I imported a machine from America and when I got it, it was so easy to use. But for the gradations, tebori is superior. Tebori is really difficult, but the results are outstanding and doesn't fade like the machine does. I am also conscious of continuing the traditions of Japan as well. It is still really difficult and I won't stop studying until I finish, so I'm continuously a student.

WHO ARE YOU INFLUENCED BY?

Kuniyoshi for his suikoden,

I WAS LIVING IN THE TEACHER'S HOUSE AND MAKING ALL THE MEALS - IT WAS LIKE I WAS HIS WIFE





PEOPLE THAT HAVE BEEN DOING IT FOR 25 YEARS, WHEN YOU TALK TO THEM, THEY KNOW ABOUT THE HUMAN ANATOMY, BUT PEOPLE THAT HAVEN'T STUDIED REALLY DON'T KNOW THESE THINGS

Hokusai for his overall balance in his works. I also like Kyosai, he is like Kuniyoshi, but a bit bizarre. In terms of tattoo artists, I am influenced by Horiyoshi III, everyone copies his books. It's really not good to do this though because it becomes removed from the originals. In terms of foreigners, I don't know the names of anyone, but I'm really interested in people that can do excellent portraits.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST GO OVERSEAS?

I went to Florida, I was really nervous, but I won a first prize. It's really different, they borrowed the first floor of a hotel, everyone turned up on customized Harley-

Davidsons. A funeral car was customized into a tattoo shop, the police turned up on Harleys and were covered in one points – the whole thing was unbelievable. There is no way you can do something like this in Japan. It's really free and all kinds of things are respected. I would love to live there, learn some English.

IS IT DIFFICULT BEING A TATTOO ARTIST IN JAPAN?

Basically everyone in Kobe thinks you are Yakuza because the Yamaguchi syndicate office is here. I want people to change this perception. It's changing a lot though because of tattoos – grandads and grandmas see 🍌



THERE ARE MANY OLD SCHOOL ARTISTS THAT HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME, BUT THEY AREN'T INTO TALKING SO MUCH, SO THEY DON'T DO PRESS AND NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THEM

Western tattoos and think it's cute. If you have irezumi, they are totally scared. If that judgment disappears it would be easier to work. It also depends a lot on the fashion, if they are dressed like you, it's totally fine, but if you look a bit difficult and you are an old man, you can have the tiniest bit of irezumi and everyone will be really scared.

WHAT KIND OF MOTIFS DO YOU LIKE?

Human characters and animals like tigers and snakes... things that actually exist.

HOW HAS THE INDUSTRY CHANGED OVER THE 25 YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING?

I've made a lot of relationships with other horishi. Before it was really hidden and it was a closed world. We can have dinner with other horishi and share aspects of our work. Having said that, the real tattoo artists that have been around for a long time that do it for money, the businessmen, they

make up about 80 percent. There are many old school artists that have been around for a long time, but they aren't into talking so much, so they don't do press and not many people know them.

WHO HAVE BEEN SOME MEMORABLE CLIENTS?

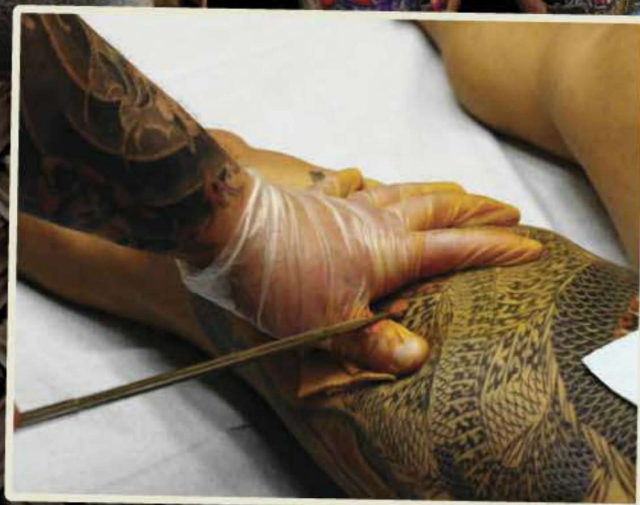
With Japanese style work, they come for years, so we really build up a friendship. Even after we finish the work, for example, if a magazine comes, I call them and they come straight away. That kind of friendship really lasts.

HOW ABOUT WITH THE ILLUSTRATIONS, HOW OFTEN DO YOU DRAW?

After I finish the tattooing for the day, I draw for four hours and then go home.

AT THE END OF THE DAY WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A TATTOO ARTIST?

That you can do a new thing every time. I'm always learning,



so what I'm doing this year and the way I am thinking next year is totally different.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE GOALS?

I want more overseas people to know about Japanese tattooing. And I would really like to live overseas too.

I want to publish a 108 Suikoden book - Horiyoshi III did the first, and no other Japanese artist has done it and I want to try doing it in a completely different way. Suikoden is a fascinating Chinese historical story where 108 characters emerge. They are all different and unique, they are really interesting. I usually tattoo famous characters such as Kumon Ryu, but there are other characters that aren't as well known that I want to tattoo as well. 🐉

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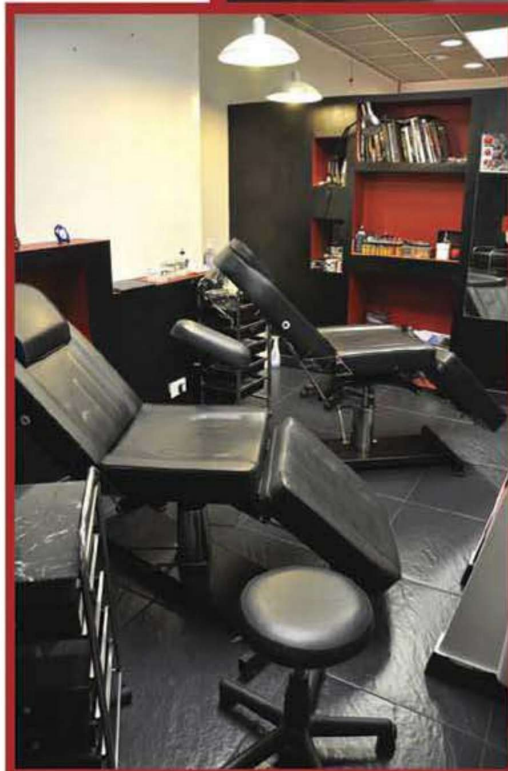
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SARAH JANE EPPERSON

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KANAE, NINE TAILS TATTOO, LONDON

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HARIZANMAI, GOTCH

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MARK CUMMINGS, TNT, ROCKINGHAM, WA

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BRANDON HEFFRON

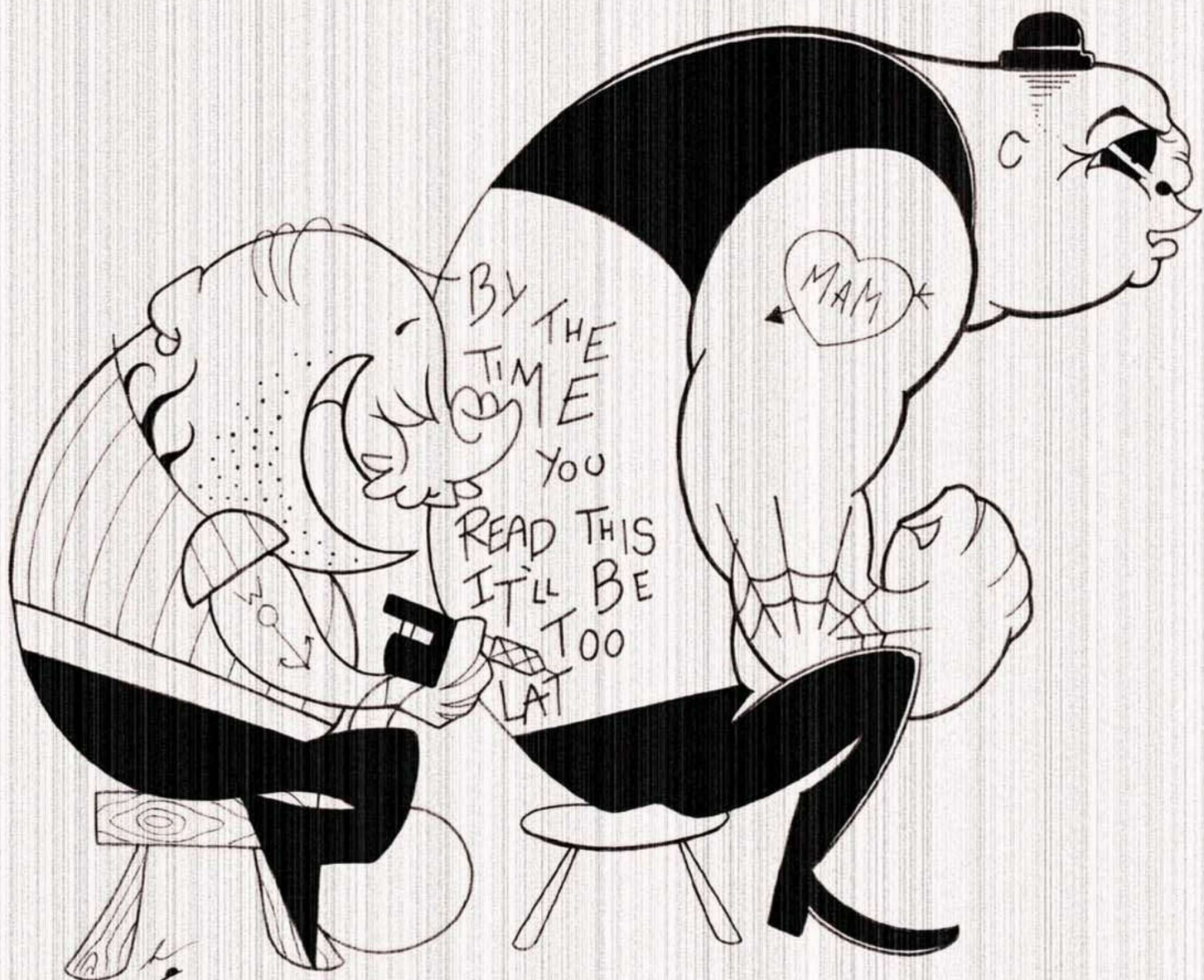
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NEW YORK GROOVE

Nobody can deny the fistfuls of talent that Paul Booth has brought to the table over the years. But currently treading the boards at the Last Rites Tattoo Theatre and touring the US until there's no stone left unturned, is Stefano Alcantara.



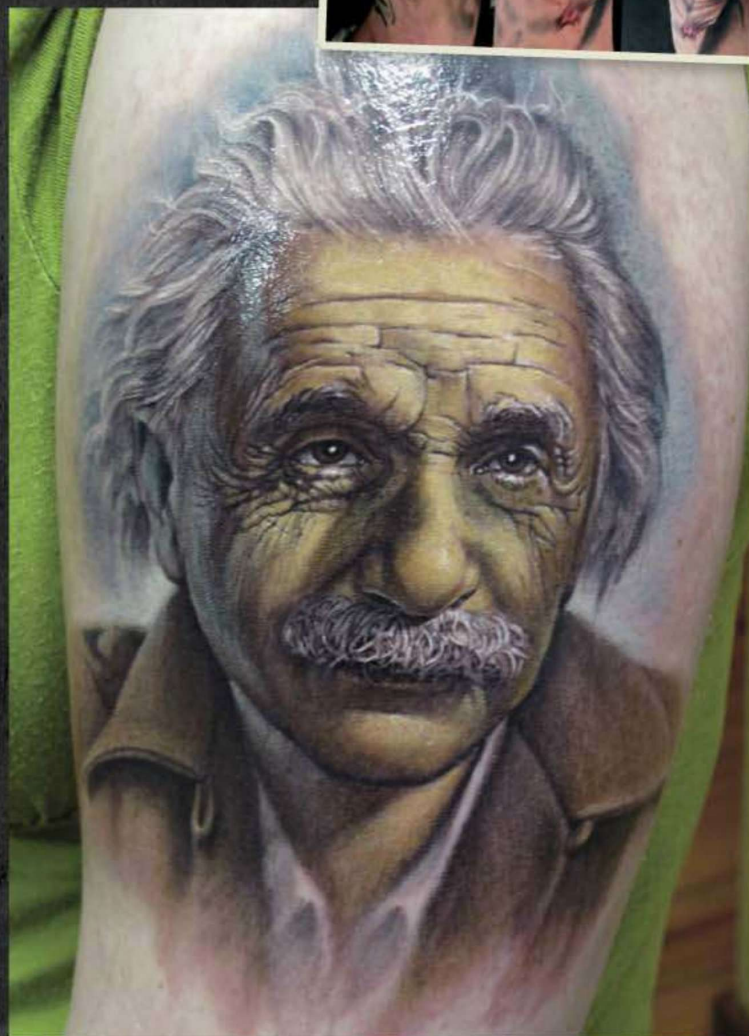
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Mr. Smith Stefano

One of the things you have to deal with in this line of work is being pursued by far too many people who think OK is good enough. For the most part, OK is good enough for most people... and this makes me sad. Not gun-to-the-head sad, but sad in that far too many people are quite happy accepting OK as being all they can get. But as fortune would have it, I am also pursued in equal amounts and am quite happy to associate with just as many who believe their best will never be achieved, no matter how long they live – it's these people who shine like underwater halogen lamps in the face of the 40 watters that actually make it worth getting up in the morning (or the afternoon). You can take the man out of the band and all that...

Today is a good day. With some stitching together of schedules via my buddy Kevin

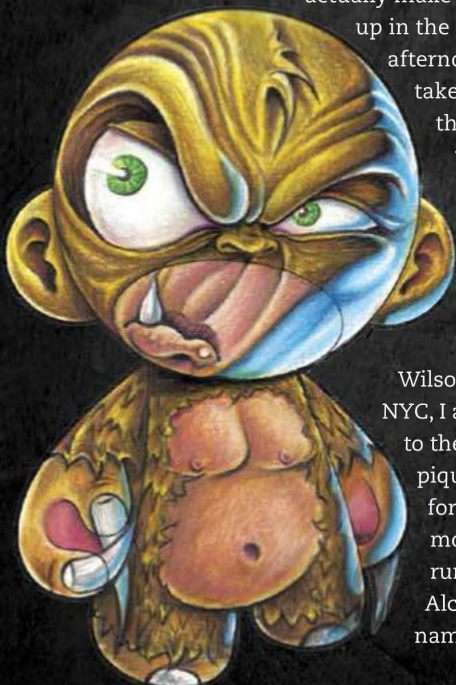
Wilson at Sacred in NYC, I am introduced to the man who has piqued my interest for quite some months on the run now, Stefano Alcantara. A new name to some, a very



well-known name to others, he is intent on rattling his cage until the paint falls off the bars leaving some of the most heartfelt art on the floor for others to see where he has come from and where he's going. So just what is it that makes a Peruvian native leave his world behind and head for New York in

search of something he knows is inside somewhere, but can't quite reach without a little assistance?

"I am definitely a totally different artist from when I arrived at Last Rites. In that environment, surrounded by such amazing tattoo artists and fine artists in the gallery, I was





I AUTOMATICALLY FELT THAT NEW YORK CITY WAS A HOME FOR ME AND I STILL LOVE IT. I BELIEVE THAT IF YOU PICTURE YOURSELF A CERTAIN WAY IN YOUR LIFE, WITH NO DOUBTS, IT WILL HAPPEN!

influenced on a daily basis. I arrived as a color artist, and my tattoos were very bright and colorful, but over time, my style became more rich and my colors more muted.

"I knew I wanted to work at Last Rites. When I got the invitation to do a guest spot I had my shop and

my apartment in Peru, but after the invitation to be a permanent artist there, I never went back. Leaving my life in Peru shows how dedicated I was to work there. I automatically felt that New York City was a home for me and I still love it. I believe that if you picture yourself a certain way in 🍀

LIMA, PERU (I)

The city of Lima, the capital of Peru, was founded by Francisco Pizarro on 18 January 1535 and given the name 'City of the Kings'. Nevertheless, with time its original name persisted, which may come from one of two sources: either the Aymara language *lima-limaq* (meaning 'yellow flower'), or the Spanish pronunciation of the Quechuan word *rimaq* (meaning 'talker', and actually written and pronounced *lima* in the nearby Quechua I languages). It is worth noting that the same Quechuan word is also the source of the name given to the river that feeds the city, the *Rimac* river (pronounced as in the politically dominant Quechua II languages, with an 'r' instead of an 'l'). Early maps of Peru show the two names displayed jointly. Are you still with me here?

LIMA, PERU (II)

In 1940, an earthquake destroyed most of the city, which at that time was mostly built of adobe and quincha. In the 1940s, Lima started a period of rapid growth spurred by migration from the Andean regions of Peru, as rural people sought opportunities for work and education. The population, estimated at 0.6 million in 1940, reached 1.9 million by 1960, and 4.8 million by 1980. At the start of this period, the urban area was confined to a triangular area bounded by the city's historic centre, Callao and Chorrillos; in the following decades settlements spread to the north, beyond the Rímac River, to the east, along the Central Highway, and to the south. The new migrants, at first confined to slums in downtown Lima, led this expansion through large-scale land invasions which evolved into shanty towns, known as pueblitos jóvenes.

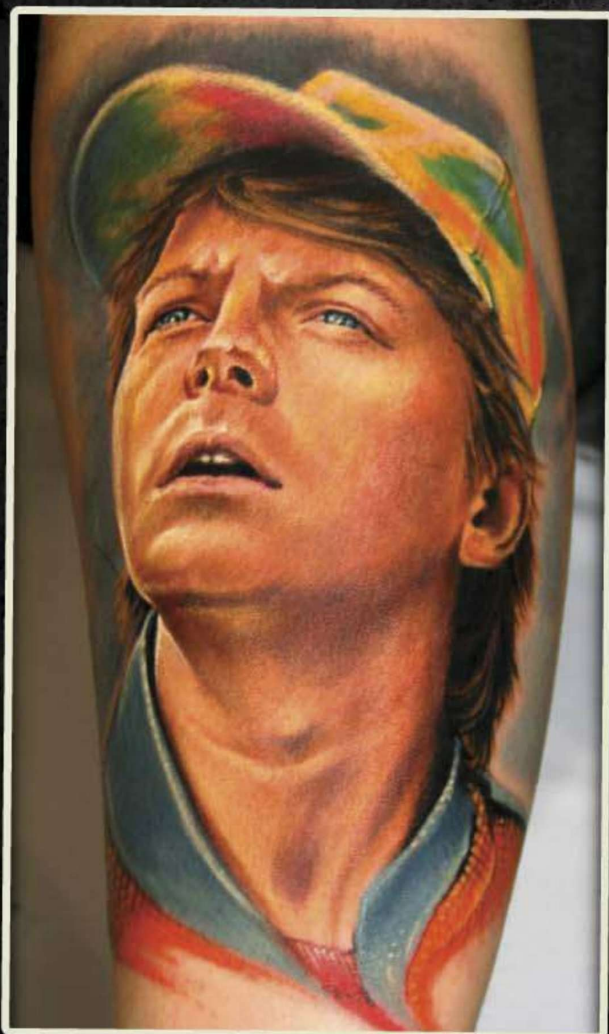
your life, with no doubts, it will happen!"

The call of the wild was strong in this one. With not too many backward glances to Lima, Stefano left behind the two studios he already owned. Even a man who has never left his hometown can accurately imagine the culture shock between Lima, Peru, and Manhattan. I take my hat off to him – that's a big jump. It takes a man of serious dedication to know that what he needs can't be found around himself and make the moves to remedy the situation.

"Yes it was a huge jump for sure – I love my country, but New York is the centre of the world and I felt that I had reached the highest level I could reach in Peru at the time. I had the best two shops down there, but I was turning into a businessman more than an artist. One day I thought that I would rather grow and look for a bigger challenge, than be in the business



I WAS TURNING INTO A BUSINESSMAN MORE THAN AN ARTIST. ONE DAY I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD RATHER GROW AND LOOK FOR A BIGGER CHALLENGE, THAN BE IN THE BUSINESS JUST TO MAKE MONEY



just to make money. I love to have new beginnings and learn from the best. Let's be honest, what could be a better home than Last Rites? It's one of the biggest names in the tattoo industry."

The man has a good point. At which juncture I have to admit, I know next to nothing about tattoo culture in Peru beyond the basics (note to self: fix this; note to others: read the box copy).

"In the 10th century, Peruvians in high levels of society had sleeves and hand tattoos so there is a tradition there. But in the modern era, Peru doesn't have a big tattoo culture.

"When I opened my shop in 1999, I was the second shop in all of Lima, the capital city. Now, the next generation of artists are coming on really strong and they are doing amazing realism. But more impressive is the group of young artists who are doing a unique style mix of new school/ cartoon/ graffiti – I haven't seen this style anywhere but in Peru at the moment."

There's obviously a whole sub-culture of a sub-culture that

needs looking at here. As we've seen time and time again, the future can spring out of the most unlikely of places when it comes to tattoo. I wonder does he think he can be part of that? In fact, working alongside Paul Booth must have its own set of very large bonuses if only by default.

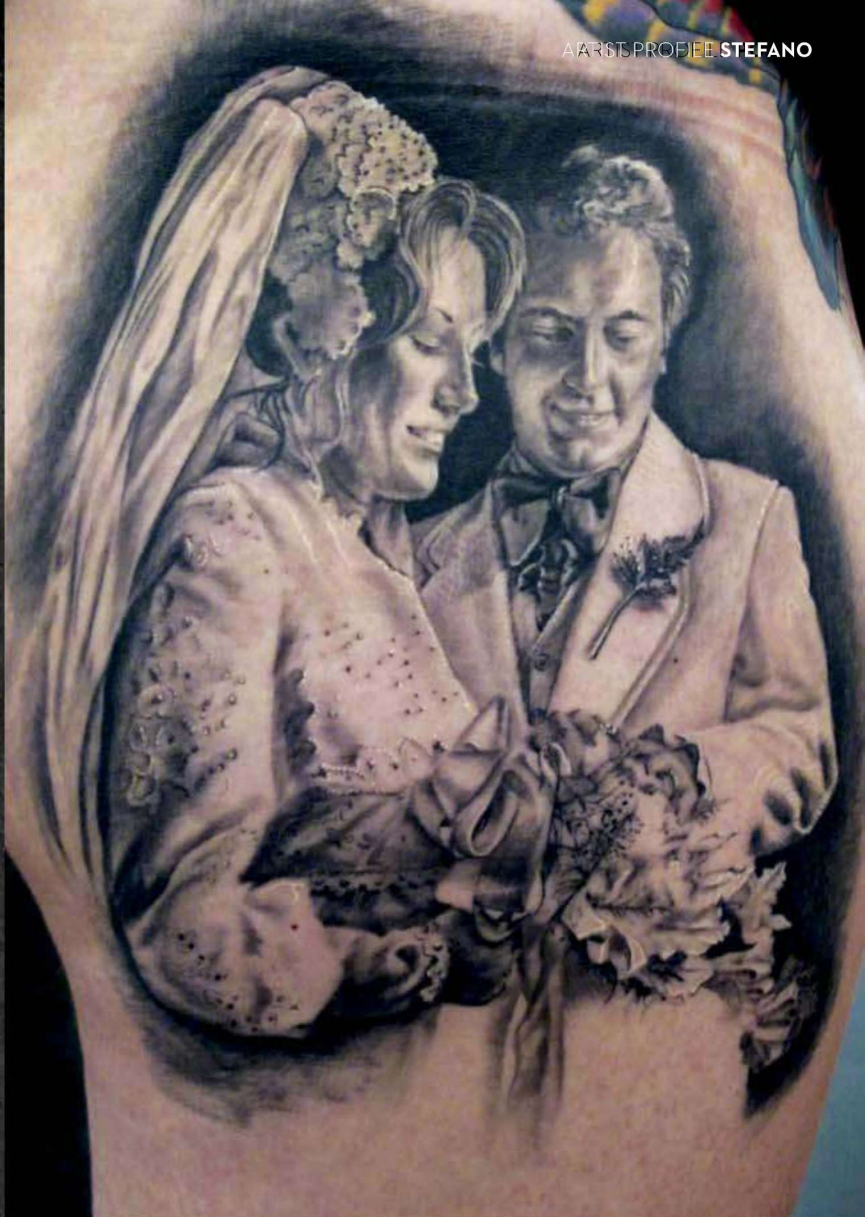
"Yeah, I studied advertising and





LIMA, PERU (III)

Lima's architecture is characterized by a mix of styles. Examples of early colonial architecture include the Monastery of San Francisco, the Cathedral of Lima, and the Torre Tagle Palace. These constructions are generally influenced by the Spanish baroque, Spanish Neoclassicism, and Spanish Colonial styles. After independence, a gradual shift towards the neoclassical and Art Nouveau styles took place. Many of these constructions were greatly influenced by French architectural styles. Many government buildings as well as major cultural institutions were contracted in this architectural time period. During the 1960s, constructions utilising the brutalist style began appearing in Lima due to the military government of Juan Velasco. Examples of this architecture include the Museum of the Nation and the Ministry of Defense. The 21st century has seen the appearance of glass skyscrapers, particularly around the city's financial district.



graphic design in Peru so I knew how to promote a brand and how to manage a business. I learned some good things from Paul – one of them is how to maintain a high

WHEN I OPENED MY SHOP IN 1999, I WAS THE SECOND SHOP IN ALL OF LIMA, THE CAPITAL CITY. NOW, THE NEXT GENERATION OF ARTISTS ARE COMING REALLY STRONG AND THEY ARE DOING AMAZING REALISM



reputation by fostering talented artists who have potential to grow and do their best. That's not something you can get from everybody.

"When I moved to the US nobody knew me, so to gain recognition I felt like I needed the exposure in conventions, and winning some awards helped me build my name. Now though, I don't really like to compete because my best reward is completing a piece that I'm proud of that made my client happy.

"I also prefer and enjoy guest spots more than conventions to get inspired or learn. Because you can be so busy at conventions, sometimes there's not even time to leave the booth or have lunch, 🍷

so conventions are rough!"

It's clear to me now – as it has been for some time – that Stefano isn't a man happy to kick back on his heels and let life come to him. There's a plan in operation here. Rather than a grand plan though,

WHEN I STUMBLED UPON A COLLECTION OF MY GREAT GRANDFATHER'S SKETCHES IN MY HOUSE, I LITERALLY SAW A PORTRAIT OF A FEMALE FACE AND THOUGHT TO MYSELF, 'WHEN DID I DRAW THAT?' BUT IT WAS HIS WORK

it appears to more along the lines of each day being taken on its own merits.

"Ha, ha. Yes, I am always thinking a few steps ahead for my future. I'm in a transition right now, from a routine of set hours, to touring and getting accustomed to life on the road. After my US tour, I want to enjoy life at my own pace, creating my own art and schedule. Next year my plan is a world tour with no limits!

"I have to say though, during my travels at different shops and conventions on the US tour, I got totally inspired being surrounded by talented artists and good friends. I don't have one specific person who I've learned technique from or anything, but recently I had the great opportunity to meet Boris Vallejo. He was my biggest inspiration when I started drawing and discovering that I wanted to devote myself to art when I was about 17."

There aren't many who would





disagree that Vallejo isn't a good choice of icon to have. And one of the great things about having an icon who came up the hard way, is seeing first-hand just how much work has been put into a life to become that icon. Talking of which, there's a story about Stefano's great grandfather that's alluded to on his site – and I think the story needs bringing out into the open because it raises some interesting questions...

"I love telling this story! A weird thing happened to me when I was around 15 years old. I confused one of my great grandfather's portrait drawings for my own. I stumbled upon a collection of my great grandfather's sketches in my house, saw a portrait of a female face and thought to myself, 'when did I draw that?' But it was his work. I analyzed his style and I felt it was exactly how I would have done it.

"After seeing this, I felt connected to his art and then hearing stories about him from my uncles, I felt like I knew him. He was an artist, a drawer, a painter, and his work still amazes me."

Every artist should have a



I DO CRITICISE MY OWN WORK CLOSELY, BUT I DO NOT DWELL ON IT BECAUSE REALLY, I ENJOY TATTOOING. I AM ALWAYS LOOKING FORWARD TO MY NEXT BEST WORK

story like that lurking in the background. Somehow it makes the dots join together to give a more cohesive picture. Personally, I've never believed that great artists are made, only born. I think you can learn enough to be

masterful in any life, but to be a true great, you have to be born that way. Nature or nurture? If you're in the market to become one of the icons of the blank generation, both is a fine idea.

Shine like halogen. 🌟

LIMA, PERU (IV)

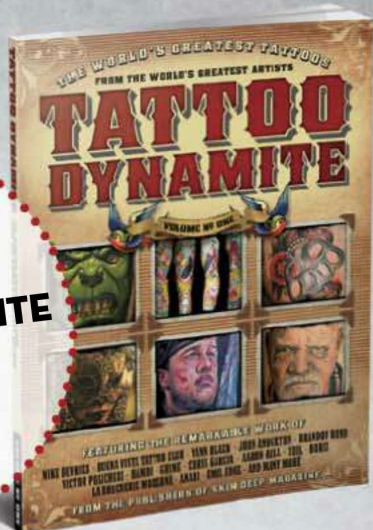
Privately-run broadcasters and newspapers dominate the media scene, with the state-run media having relatively small audiences. Lima is home to dozens of radio stations and several TV services. Many radio stations and regional newspapers are available in the provinces. Defamation remains a criminal offence. "Too many legal proceedings and vexatious applications continue to hamper the free flow of information... encouraging self-censorship on the part of journalists and bloggers," Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said in 2012. Physical attacks and verbal threats against journalists are commonplace, with topics including corruption and drug trafficking considered particularly dangerous to cover, reports US-based, Freedom House.

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Simon Lundh Pooch

THEME PARK DOG

The annual visits to Disneyworld as a kid conspired to make him fall in love with theme parks... not for the speed and excitement, but for the art. Today the American artist and tattooist, Pooch, mixes Walt Disney with H.R. Giger to create his own Coney Island on canvas



CONEY ISLAND (I)

Due to Coney Island's location – easily reached from Manhattan and other boroughs of New York City, yet distant enough to suggest a proper vacation – it began attracting holidaymakers in the 1830s and 1840s, when carriage roads and steamship services reduced travel time from a half-day journey, to just two hours. The original Coney Island Hotel was constructed in 1829, with The Brighton Hotel, Manhattan Beach Hotel, and Oriental Hotel opening soon after, with each trying to provide an increasing level of elegance. Coney Island became a major resort destination after the American Civil War, as excursion railroads and the Coney Island and Brooklyn Railroad streetcar line reached the area in the 1860s, and the Iron steamboat company arrived in 1881. The two Iron Piers served as docks for the steamboats until they were destroyed in the 1911 Dreamland fire. When the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company electrified the steam railroads and connected Brooklyn to Manhattan via the Brooklyn Bridge at the beginning of the 20th century, Coney Island soon turned from a resort to a location accessible to day-trippers from New York City, especially those escaping the summer heat.



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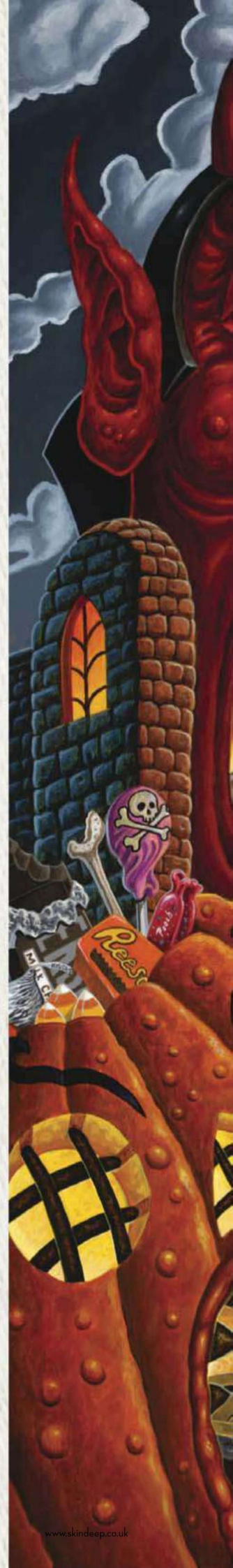
tatzpooch@bellsouth.net

You instantly notice the love for roller coasters when you click yourself to Pooch's website. Pooch Island, as he calls it, is an homage to the traditional funfair and an obvious reference to the theme park in Coney Island, New York, where all kinds of weirdness, including tattoo artists, existed back in the day.

"The reason Pooch Island came to life was of course my theme park-inspired paintings. The website undoubtedly had to be like an amusement park, so my web

designer and I worked out the site together," he says. "Since I grew up in Florida we visited Disneyworld basically every summer, and I liked the three dimensional art they had created there. I didn't care much for speed and excitement; it was more the visual thing. It's influenced me a lot. I'm not a Disney fanatic, but I appreciate his vision and there's something about the park I like."

The happy-go-lucky Disneyworld of song and glitter is however not what's depicted in Pooch's paintings. Even though there are roller







coasters he has other influences as well... much darker ones. "My biggest influences come from tattooing and the surrealist painter, H.R. Giger. Why I started painting has a lot to do with him. I didn't want to do anything too reminiscent of his work, however, but he had this undefined 3D aspect, something that reminded you of a theme park ride. It's not a roller coaster per se, what

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN CONEY ISLAND SINCE MY PARENTS ARE FROM NEW YORK. IT HAD TATTOO ARTISTS AND WAS A LITTLE MORE OF A FREAK SHOW ON THE OUTSKIRTS

he does is more like a house of horrors. Combine that with Disney and you get what I do. I've always been interested in Coney Island

as my parents are from New York. It had tattoo artists and was a little more of a freak show on the outskirts while Disneyworld



**CONEY ISLAND (II)**

Charles I. D. Looff, a Danish woodcarver, built the first carousel at Coney Island in 1876. It was installed at Vanderveer's bath house complex at West 6th Street and Surf Avenue, which later became known as Balmer's Pavilion. The carousel consisted of hand-carved horses and animals standing two abreast, with a drummer and a flute player providing the music; a tent-top provided protection from the weather. The fare was five cents. From 1885 to 1896, the Coney Island Elephant was the first sight to greet immigrants arriving in New York, who would see it before the Statue of Liberty became visible. In 1915 the Sea Beach Line was upgraded to a subway line. This was followed by upgrades to the other former excursion roads, and the opening of the New West End Terminal in 1919, thus ushering in Coney Island's busiest era. Nathan's Famous original hot dog stand opened on Coney Island in 1916 and quickly became a landmark. An annual Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest has been held there annually on July 4 since opening, but has only attracted broad attention and television coverage since the late 1990s.

was commercial – I wanted to introduce darker stuff, of which there were a lot in Coney Island.”

The designs are not just dark, but also extremely detailed, which makes him approach a new painting somewhat like tattooing.

“I start by drawing my idea on paper. Then I transfer it to canvas 🍷



MY BIGGEST INFLUENCES COME FROM TATTOOING AND THE SURREALIST PAINTER, H.R. GIGER. WHY I STARTED PAINTING HAS A LOT TO DO WITH HIM, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING TOO REMINISCENT OF HIS WORK





CONEY ISLAND (III)

Between about 1880 and World War II, Coney Island was the largest amusement area in the United States, attracting several million visitors per year. At its height it contained three competing major amusement parks, Luna Park, Dreamland, and Steeplechase Park, as well as many independent amusements. Astroland served as a major amusement park from 1962 to 2008, and was replaced by a new incarnation of Dreamland in 2009, and of Luna Park in 2010. The other parks and attractions include Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park, 12th Street Amusements, and Kiddie Park, while the Eldorado Arcade has an indoor bumper car ride. The Zipper and Spider on 12th Street were closed permanently on September 4, 2007, and dismantling began after its owner lost his lease. They are to be reassembled at an amusement park in Honduras. On April 20, 2011, the first new roller coasters to be built at Coney Island in 80 years were opened as part of efforts to reverse the decline of the amusement area.

using a projector. After that I start painting everything in brown, a little like when you do black and grey tattoos. The only time I don't use brown is when I paint in greyscale, then I start with black. I like to sit with a painting for a whole day – something you can't do when you tattoo since the customer will be in pain. With painting it

takes a couple of hours to find your flow and when you do you want to stay there."

He found his style around 2000. Since then his level of activity has (like a roller coaster) gone up and down. He's had exhibitions in Los Angeles, Seattle, and on home turf, but he's not been painting

WITH PAINTING IT TAKES A COUPLE OF HOURS TO FIND YOUR FLOW AND WHEN YOU DO YOU WANT TO STAY THERE



so much at the moment since his tattoo studio, Altered State, in Lake Worth, Florida, keeps him more than busy.

"Tattoos are so popular right now, that's almost all I do. I tattoo five days a week and you really should be off work to properly get into painting. If you want to put together an exhibition you need to paint constantly for six months. I'm hoping to stock up on paintings, though, but most of what I do right now is pre-ordered, so it's hard to find the time." 🐾



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Barbara Pavone Joe Capobianco



"I never attended art school or college, but we had some pretty amazing art teachers in high school who would really try and push us as students," says Joe Capobianco, one of the most talented and influential folks in tattooing today. "I was [also] surrounded by other friends that had the same need to learn art, so it worked out as a good support group. From then on, it was just a lot of hard work."

Starting out drawing the likes of Frankenstein's monster and the werewolf when he was just six years old, Capobianco's artistic inclination led him to airbrushing, which he mastered of course, and then to tattooing, all thanks to meeting the right people.

"When I was in high school there was a fellow student using an airbrush to create a mural on the walls – I was kinda fascinated by it," he remembers. "When I asked him about it, he gave me the name of a guy in the mall who could give me lessons. I applied, but could only afford one lesson and a cheap airbrush. I went home,



practiced my ass off, and in a month I was working on that mall.

"As for tattooing, I was asked to apprentice by a shopowner out on Long Island, New York. At first, I turned him down as I had a job doing illustration work for another company. Eventually, work kinda slowed down with that company and he asked me again. I accepted and never looked back."

needle to skin, shaking like a leaf and being a bit freaked about marking him for life. But then, once you start, you're just so concerned with doing it properly that you don't even consider what you're doing to them. Doing a good job was all that was on my mind."

From that first successful tattoo, Capobianco only became better and better, eventually

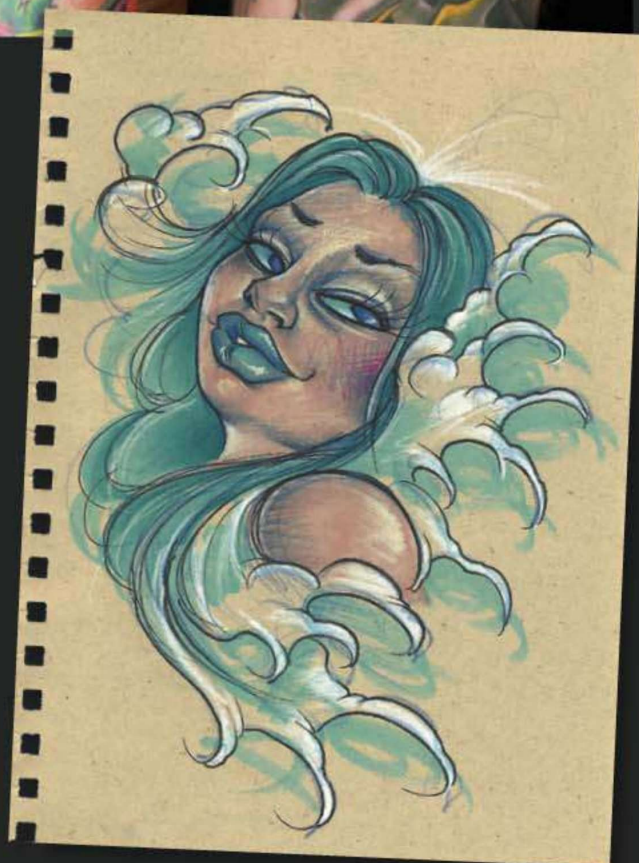
THE VERY FIRST TIME I TATTOOED ANOTHER PERSON DURING MY APPRENTICESHIP, IT WAS ON A FRIEND... I REMEMBER JUST BEFORE TOUCHING NEEDLE TO SKIN, SHAKING LIKE A LEAF AND BEING A BIT FREAKED ABOUT MARKING HIM FOR LIFE

Which isn't to say there wasn't some anxiety accompanying his initial venture into a completely new field.

"The very first time I tattooed another person during my apprenticeship, it was on a friend," says Capobianco. "It was a tribal scorpion on his thigh. I'm proud to say it looks pretty darn good and he still wears it today. [But] I remember just before touching

reaching an unrivaled level of craftsmanship, which resulted in the creation of his own trademark pin-up girl style – the Capo Gal – that spread like wildfire and is now so in demand, it's hard to imagine Capobianco has enough hours in the day to tattoo the gal on everyone who wants her. Not that he's complaining.

"Capo Gal is just a nickname that one of my customers pinned



on my work. It started many years ago when my style was first really starting to develop and become more highly recognised. As for being readily associated with her, I couldn't be happier; I think 🌸

that it's great to have your work recognized as being yours. I think it's what a lot of artists try to attain in their trade."

INDUSTRY TALES

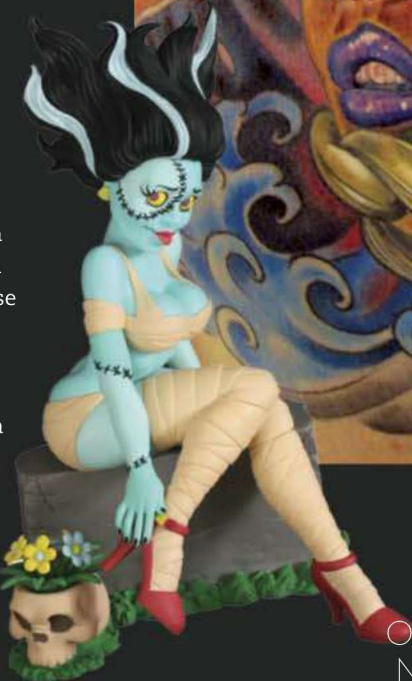
"Every day is a challenge," says Capobianco who has been tattooing for a good 20 years now, although he is yet to get tired of it. "It's more about trying to take a break from the stress of trying to produce quality art on skin. It will never become mundane, but trying to maintain a quality that both my clients and I are happy with can become quite tedious, so a break is wanted every now and again. Unfortunately, trying to find time for that break is the real challenge."

As is dealing with the fact that tattooing has been changing so much so quickly lately.

"[With] the sheer amount of people getting into it – tattooers, shops, suppliers, conventions – it just seems too big sometimes and that can be a bit scary. With such a huge amount of diverse people getting into the trade, you have lots of greats, but it also creates tons of less than fantastic individuals. And I'm not just talking tattooers, but suppliers, conventions and publications.

"I think when you have a trade that has grown in what some may consider a short period of time with little to no quality control, you're gonna have a lot of crap. So while I'm happy to be part of something that is both creative and profitable, it would be nice to see a bit of restraint put on it when it comes to the amount of change that is occurring."

One of the most negative side effects (something that Capobianco has experienced first-hand) is the increasing number of artists ripping off other people's work, especially highly sought after styles like



WITH SUCH A HUGE AMOUNT OF DIVERSE PEOPLE GETTING INTO THE TRADE, YOU HAVE LOTS OF GREATS, BUT IT ALSO CREATES TONS OF LESS THAN FANTASTIC INDIVIDUALS. AND I'M NOT JUST TALKING TATTOOERS, BUT SUPPLIERS, CONVENTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Capobianco's. But what can you do when you find out someone's been tattooing your designs?

"This goes right back to what I was saying about too many people in the trade and little to no education because of it," he says. "I remember when I was apprenticing being told to never reproduce images from tattoo magazines. Today, some tattooers simply don't want to create their own work, they want to have others do the work for them and take the credit

for the work on their end.

"I've always tried to call these people out when I could. Some are understanding and realise where myself and others are coming from with our feelings and just needed to have it spelled out for them. Others are just, for lack of a better word, assholes about thinking it's OK to do what they've done. To me, this just shows the level of class that person has and is probably a good gauge as to how far they'll get in the business."

TATTOO TRANSITION

"I was very fortunate to apprentice in a very busy shop, plus I was prepared to walk away from painting to pursue another style of art. Tattooing truly came around at the right time for me. The best advice I ever received was keep my eyes and ears open and always keep trying to get better."



HOPE AND POMADE

Always evolving and contributing great things to tattooing, Capobianco opened his own studio and art gallery – Hope Gallery Tattoo – back in 2003 without really planning to.

“I moved to New Haven out of a necessity to be closer to family, as my mother was diagnosed with cancer and I wanted to be there for her,” he says. “I just didn’t want to move back to New York, so Connecticut was a good commute, and I had good friend, Eric Merrill, and the fellers over at Dark Side Tattoo there. I was able to rent space out of that shop and still bounce back and forth to New York for my mom. Unfortunately, Dark Side Tattoo had some

internal issues that I wouldn’t be part of, so I wanted out of there. Eric, Julio Rodriguez and I decided to open Hope more out of necessity than want, but once we did, it was perfect.”

And since they were at it, why not add an extra component and raise the bar with an art gallery? “The art gallery is strictly a selfish

IT’S GREAT TO HAVE YOUR WORK
RECOGNISED AS BEING YOURS. I THINK
IT’S WHAT A LOT OF ARTISTS TRY TO
ATTAIN IN THEIR TRADE

indulgence,” admits Capobianco. “I wanted a place that we could feature our own art and showcase others that we admire. I will admit that there is little to no money in it for us, just the joy of getting to see some amazing art come

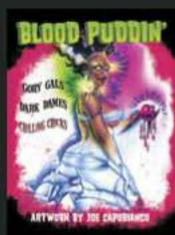
through our doors.”

In addition to all the art he produces, there have also been books, DVDs and even an exclusive vinyl toy. But most curious, and let’s face it, badass of all has to be the pomade.

“For the longest time I’ve used grease/ pomade in my hair. After a time it was getting harder and harder to find a product that I really dug, so my wife suggested I just make my own. How hard could

it be? I started making my own pomade about four years ago. It took about two-and-a-half years to finally find a chemist to make it better and mass-produce it. The line is called Slicker th’n Hell and it’s available for purchase [online].” 🍌





BLOOD PUDDIN'
The latest book came about as a way of collecting all of the works that I titled Blood Puddin' pin-ups. While Cheesecake is sweet, cute, sort of a traditional pin-up, Blood Puddin' is darker, bloodier and sometimes a dirtier style of pin-up. This book is sort of like a combination of my earlier works in the sense that it showcases both paintings, as well as a ton of sketches, all with the Blood Puddin' flair that has sort of dominated my style as of late.

I'M OF THE OPINION THAT THIS TV THING AIN'T GOING AWAY, SO IT'S BETTER TO TRY AND EMBRACE IT, PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE, AND TRY AND MAKE IT WORK FOR US FOR A CHANGE

TV AND BEYOND

Oxygen Network's Best Ink is just the latest addition to a long list of tattoo-related TV shows, but it does have one thing setting it apart from the pack – Joe Capobianco as head judge. A role he himself was initially skeptical about accepting and that still gets him flack.

"I was contacted by a feller asking if I'd be interested in speaking to this network about a show, and my first response was 'Hell no!' But after thinking about it a bit, I thought better to listen to what they have in mind than turn it down outright.

After listening to their offer, I thought that it was a decent idea; showcasing some young talent in sort of a competition fashion.

"I've received a bit of hate from doing the show, but the people who mean the most to me have been both supportive and honest, and realistically, they're the only ones whose opinions I truly care about. I'm of the opinion that this TV thing ain't going away, so it's better to try and embrace it, play an active role, and try and make it work for us for a change. Granted, I've no delusions that TV and networks give a rat's ass about us

or this trade, but if good artists step up and take on some of the spotlight here, then the public will only see that and perhaps have a change of opinion on what great tattooing is truly about."

And who better to lead the way than an artist whose greatest fear is being separated from tattooing?

"Hell, it scares the crap out of me every day that I may not be able to do this forever. It certainly is [one of the hardest jobs], but I think that the rewards far outweigh the hassles. Clients can be difficult, but fact is they can be the best part of our trade as well. I've made some great friends just from getting to know them while tattooing them. I've always said it's a tough business, but it beats digging ditches and flipping burgers for a living. 🍔

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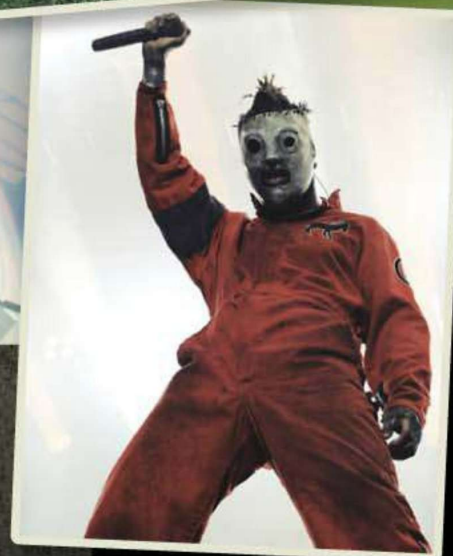
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MASKED

AVENGER

Barbara Pavone

The mask-wearing frontman of heavy metal super group, Slipknot, is not necessarily the person you'd expect to be proudly sporting a David Bowie tattoo, barely being able to sit still when passionately discussing literature or getting chocked up when asked about the loss of a dear friend and band mate, which just proves he's one rare creature. Time to bow down to the one and only Mr. Corey Taylor



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Joining him backstage at one of North America's premiere metal festivals, Heavy MTL, in Montreal, Canada, it takes all of about five seconds for this journalist to realize that with the amount of stories Taylor has to share, and the animated, captivating manner in which he does so, it's best to just shut up, listen and pray that some of that Taylor magic rubs off on you.

Following a brief apology about his black make-up, uniform and the mask draped across his knee, something he'd admittedly prefer to do without five hours before show time, it begins.

"To me, any time you see a fucking 'Best Of' album, it means that band is kind of tapped. The label came to us with it, like, 'Yeah, we'd love to put out

a greatest hits,'" he says about Slipknot's latest release, *Antennas to Hell*, putting on his best corporate America voice.

"We were like, 'Pump the breaks, kid, what the fuck are you talking about?' We weren't



THOMPSON IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE WRITERS. BEING A WRITER I JUST TRY TO ASPIRE TO FIND MY OWN VOICE AND BE AS ORIGINAL AS I CAN BE, BUT ALSO ENTERTAINING, AND REALLY KIND OF JUST SHUFFLE OFF ANY BONDS THAT MIGHT HOLD ME BACK FROM SPEAKING MY MIND

gonna put something out that didn't make sense for us, so we approached it very much as just a compilation, something that would represent the Paul Gray years in a lot of ways. Once we wrapped our heads around that side of it, it made more sense, then it was like, okay, we can play

with this, it doesn't have to be just a bunch of fucking radio hits and bullshit, like, 'Hey! Look at us! We've got these hits! Hey!' We were able to do something really cool and conceptual, really make it more about the artistic side of everything rather than just press a fucking disc and get it out there." 🍷

ALL OF MY STUFF IS BASED AROUND NOT ONLY MY PERSONALITY, BUT MY VIEWS ON BEING CIVILISED ANIMALS, BASICALLY. WE ARE ALL OF US A LITTLE BIT DARK AND A LITTLE BIT LIGHT, SO THE SUN AND MOON, ITS A FAIRLY DARK PIECE, BUT IT REALLY TIES EVERYTHING TOGETHER



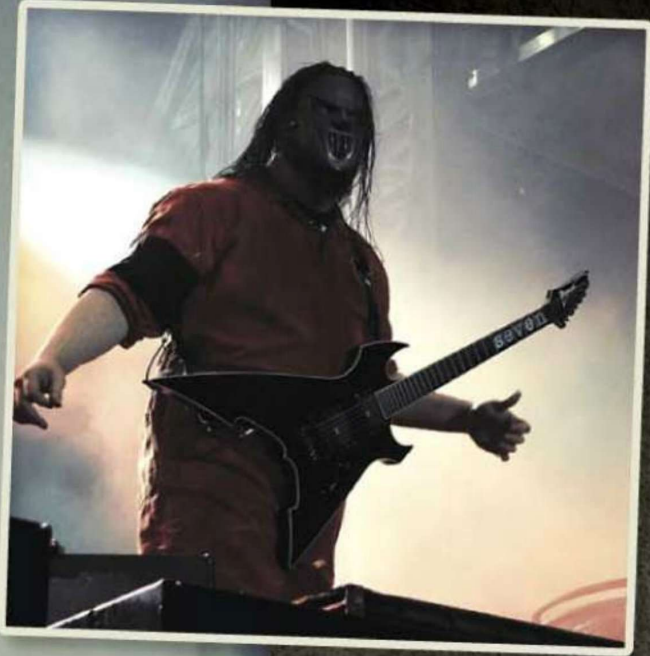
Following the tragic passing of songwriter and bassist, Paul Gray, back in 2010, the band was at a standstill, unsure of how to proceed. And although they're now in the midst of their healing process, Taylor admits it may be a few years before new material is released. "In my mind, it still makes sense to take those baby steps and wait a little. We're all starting to kind of talk about music, but for me, this album is too important because it'll be the first one without Paul, who was the glue of this band and such a powerful musical force. I don't wanna become the band that just phones it in. That's one of my pure terrors in life.

"If we're gonna move forward, we have to do it together, it can't just be a couple of guys running the writing sessions and I think everybody's really cool with that, but it's still gonna be very strange going into a studio without him."

In the meantime, the road has been a big help, reinstating strength and their love for the craft, their fans and each other.

"This band was very fractious





for a very long time, and then when Paul died there was a point when I wasn't even sure if we'd ever play another show," says Taylor. "It wasn't until we all started talking about it and realized that we've got each other to help each other through this, the fans don't, so it very quickly became apparent that we should at least go out and let the fans, if this is it, celebrate Paul with us."

"The kind of cool thing that happened was we all really came together as a band again, as a family. We're all joking around again like we used to – if people only realized what fucking dorks we are... it's really the funniest shit. If we just put a hidden camera up while we're getting ready, some of the buffoonery that goes on, it makes a locker room look like a fucking tea party, let's put it that way."

MASKED CRUSADERS

"All of a sudden, I blacked out for the last two songs," Taylor recalls about his recent health scare due to an overheated stage. "I was convinced that we'd had to cut the show early and when my wife told me that we finished the show, I was like, 'You gotta be shitting me!' I've had moments where that stuff has kind of

happened, but I've been able to come back into it, luckily on beat where the singing's supposed to come in, but that was intense. Everybody turned into big brother mode too, like, 'You gotta hydrate! You gotta eat!' and I'm like, 'Jesus, fuckin' settle down.'

"I think the show kind of ghosts in and out of organised and disorganised chaos. There have been times where it's just going great and then all of a sudden a keg comes flying across the stage and I'm like, 'I didn't fucking know that was gonna happen!' I call it the Live from Hell set because if you look at the stage, it just looks like we're playing the devil's waiting room."

A big part of their live show's unique appeal – and the cause of some rather odd and uncomfortable side effects – is all the custom-designed masks.

"I start having ideas for masks during the writing process and I get this visual of what the music is making me feel like. Like with this guy," says Taylor, picking his mask up off his lap, "I just wanted to make it something so striking and yet so devoid of

THE CHEST AREA SUCKS, MAN. ESPECIALLY FOR ME, THERES NOTHING THERE, ITS ALL BONE AND THEN YOU FEEL IT ALL THROUGH YOUR ARMS AND OH, IT SUCKS SO BAD. SO IM LIKE, YOU KNOW WHAT, ONE AND DONE, WERE FINE HERE

humanity. I just wanted to strip it all away in a large part – I hate to fucking say it – because of all the pretty boy shit I was getting during the Stone Sour tour. Everybody's like, 'He's very cute!' and all these girls are showing up and I'm like, 'What the fuck is going on here?'

"It was very odd for me, so I was just like, 'Alright, mother fuckers!' I just wanted to go as far the other way as possible; and it has seriously become one of my favorite masks. It's hard to fucking see through, but I wanted to take away the eyes, I wanted

to take away the cheekbones and the bullshit, I just wanted to make it something very hard to look at for too long, especially when it's live where I can just give the people a little extra 'Fuck you, what the shit is going on?'" he says, eerily tilting his head.

But sacrifices do need to be made to achieve such a brilliant effect. "Not to get gross, but there are some very strange fluids that come out of my face during a show that I've never experienced before, and I'm just now kind of starting to make peace with it," says Taylor. "The shit doesn't even come out of me when I'm doing Stone Sour, it's a wholly different weirdness – it's the Slipknot juice! I can't even stand myself when I get off stage. I cannot get out of this shit fast enough. I'm like, 'You need to get the fuck out of my way, this needs to go!'" he laughs.

TAILORED INK

"Some of them are pretty piecemeal, but others are pretty sweet," says Taylor, rolling up his sleeves. "Heath Ledger as Joker was actually the first one

that Shane Munce did for me on the Mayhem Festival in 2008, and it's still to this day just so fucking righteous. A lot of people thought it was a photo transfer. After that I had him do Bowie. I love Bowie,

because to me, he represents what you can do with music if you give yourself in to just doing whatever comes to mind."

Munce's latest addition is a portrait of Johnny Deep as Hunter S. Thompson, which, as Taylor puts it, is "still pretty chewy".

"Thompson is one of my favorite writers. Being a writer I just try to aspire to find my own voice and be as original as I can be, but also entertaining, and really kind of just shuffle off any bonds that might hold me back from speaking my mind."

Then there's his Paul Booth 🍌

chest piece, "which is probably the most important because if my tattoos were a map, this would be the key... the legend. All of my stuff is based around not only my personality, but my views on being civilised animals, basically. We are all of us a little bit dark and a little bit light, so the sun and moon, it's a fairly dark piece, but it really ties everything together.

THIS ALBUM IS TOO IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT'LL BE THE FIRST ONE WITHOUT PAUL, WHO WAS THE GLUE OF THIS BAND AND SUCH A POWERFUL MUSICAL FORCE. I DON'T WANNA BECOME THE BAND THAT JUST PHONES IT IN. THAT'S ONE OF MY PURE TERRORS IN LIFE

"Paul Booth, his black and white work is really killer, so of course I threw a curve ball on him and got him to do colour, which he really hadn't done before. We were out on Tattoo the Earth together in 2000 and I was like, 'If I'm gonna have another opportunity, I don't know when the fuck that's gonna be.' The color has kind of faded over the years, but I think that kind of adds a little bit more character to it. Everybody asks me, 'You gonna touch it up?' and I'm like, 'Fuck no!' The chest area sucks, man. Especially for me, there's nothing there, it's all bone and then you feel it all through your arms and oh, it sucks so bad. So I'm like, you know what, one and done, we're fine here.

"The one I'm most proud of right now is Paul that I got when I was on NY Ink; Tim Hendricks did it and it came out so well. I basically came in with a photo and that number two and he put it together right next to my griffin tattoo – my son's name is Griffin and this is kind of the leg that I'm gonna dedicate to my kids, so I figured he fits on there too.

"I go through huge bouts where I don't even wanna hear about tattoos, I don't wanna sit through the fuckin' bullshit 'cause I can usually do about

three-and-a-half hours and then I start to wanna punch somebody and going to a dark fucking place.

"Paul took about five hours, and by the time Hendricks was going back in on the shit, that was the worst thing ever. I can take the virgin territory, it's when you go back into the shit you've already conquered that fucks with my head."

ROCK ON THE SIDE

"With Slipknot there's almost an unhinging that happens that is very freeing in a lot of ways; with Stone Sour there's more structure, there's more stability," Taylor explains about his other musical project, the band he founded long before joining Slipknot, which disbanded, reunited, and is now releasing its fourth album, *House of Gold & Bones – Part 1*, on October 23, with Part 2 following next year.

"It's the best music we've ever done, bar none. It's very dark, there are some heavy moments on this, but there are also some beautiful passages. It really is a concept album where everything kind of flows into each other, but there are those brief rest bits where you catch your breath and absorb everything.

"The story that I wrote for it will feature heavily and I'm actually in the works right now to make a comic book for it. I don't want it to be too comic book-y, if that makes sense. Like taking the storytelling of *V* for Vendetta and the artistry that you see in a lot of Neil Gaiman's stuff and just kind of putting that together."

Watching his face light up, even with all that black make-up on, it's not hard to tell Taylor's a man of many interests, writing




being one of his greatest.

"This is the universe throwing me a little extra; never in a million years would I have thought I'd be able to do something like this. It's like getting to write my book. I was so fucking excited. I'm like, 'I'm writing a book!'" he says in a voice overflowing with glee, typing vigorously in the air. "I turn it in and I'm like, 'People like my book! I'm gonna write another one!'"

"So I'm working on book two now, it's fucking crazy. People are like, 'Why didn't you write a book before?' Because it wasn't time. Things come to you when they're meant to, but at the same time, it just shows you the work that I've put in over the years. I'm very proud of that. I wasn't ever just handed anything." 🤘



SLIPKNOT'S
Antennas to Hell is available in stores and on iTunes now. *Stone Sour's House of Gold & Bones – Part 1* will be released October 23.



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INK-N-IRON

Are you a regular at conventions held in the old continent?
If so, forget everything you know



Photo: P-mod & Dwam

The Ink-n-Iron festival is definitely of American taste – oversized, just like the gigantic ship where, over three days, the ninth edition of this California convention unrolled. Knowing from experience that conventions tend to resemble their host cities and that this enormous metropolis is capable of both good and bad, we had to wonder which side of the great California we would see and if a regurgitation of sequins would be in order. A bias perhaps, but those who have had the chance to walk on Venice Beach or rub the City of Angels will know what we're talking about.

Luckily, the first few metres – following a security check-in worthy of an international airport – swept away all our fears. In short, it was beautiful, it was big, and the girls had it in the pants. If the word 'festival' isn't always justly used, it is more than justified here. Outdoors, you had booths of clothing, accessories and food that spread out further than the eye could see.

Lovers of kustom culture were not left out either, with more than 200 hot rods and custom vehicles pre-1969 displayed under the Motorama dome. Even before

AN ARTISTIC DEBAUCHERY FEATURING ARTISTS FROM 30 STATES AND 25 COUNTRIES TOOK PLACE IN THE BOWELS OF THE OLD LADY.

QUEEN MARY

The Queen Mary, nicknamed the 'Old Lady', is a ship that was inaugurated in Scotland in 1934. Thanks to its avant-garde technology and unprecedented luxury, high dignitaries, Hollywood celebrities and British royalty made up its privileged clientele in the early years.

When WWII broke out, the Queen Mary was taken to Sydney where it was converted into a transport ship for Australian and New Zealand troops, carrying more than 15,000 men each time it sailed. Due to its size and prestige, the ship was a top target for the Kriegsmarine, however its high speed made it impossible for German submarines to catch.

It is after completing their military duties that the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth dominated transatlantic traffic between Southampton, Cherbourg and New York until 1966, before spending their older years as a popular attraction, hotel and top event destination in the Port of Long Beach.

entering the heart of the action, we already knew it would be impossible to be bored.

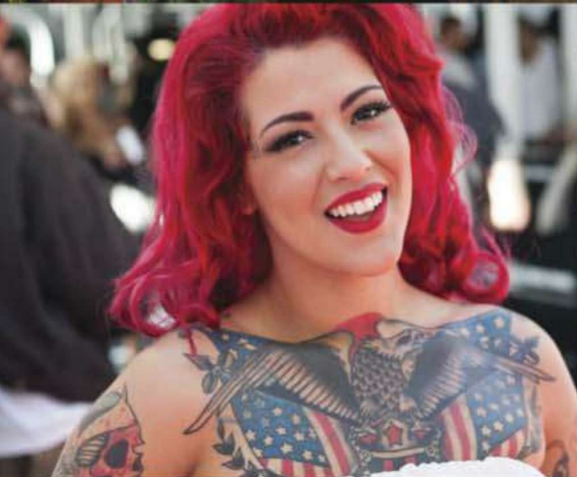
Music was also an integral part of the event with several local bands entertaining the crowd. Suicidal Tendencies, Corrosion of Conformity, Buckcherry, Misfits, Vandals, Aggrolites, Slackers, Pennywise, and Face to Face, all played on the festival's main stage throughout the weekend, proving that Californians don't do things half-assed.

Walking around, it wasn't

unusual to see Jerry Only, frontman of the Misfits, taking photos with fans of all ages; vomiting motor fat and with a soundcheck tinged with heavy bass, they seemed to be the perfect band to provide the soundtrack for the boarding of Queen Mary (see the box out) where 280 of the world's best artists officiated on the ship's three lower floors.

An artistic debauchery featuring artists from 30 states and 25 countries took place in the bowels of the Old Lady. Jeff Gogue, Juan 🍌







WITH AN ART SHOW, BURLESQUE PERFORMANCE, '50S FASHION SHOW AND PIN-UP CONTEST, THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF ENTERTAINMENT EITHER, AND SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Puente (Black Heart Tattoo, SF), Oliver Peck (Elm Street Tattoo, TX), Noi Siamese III, and Carlos Torres are only a small example of the quality and variety of styles represented, although black and grey and realism were slightly more widespread.

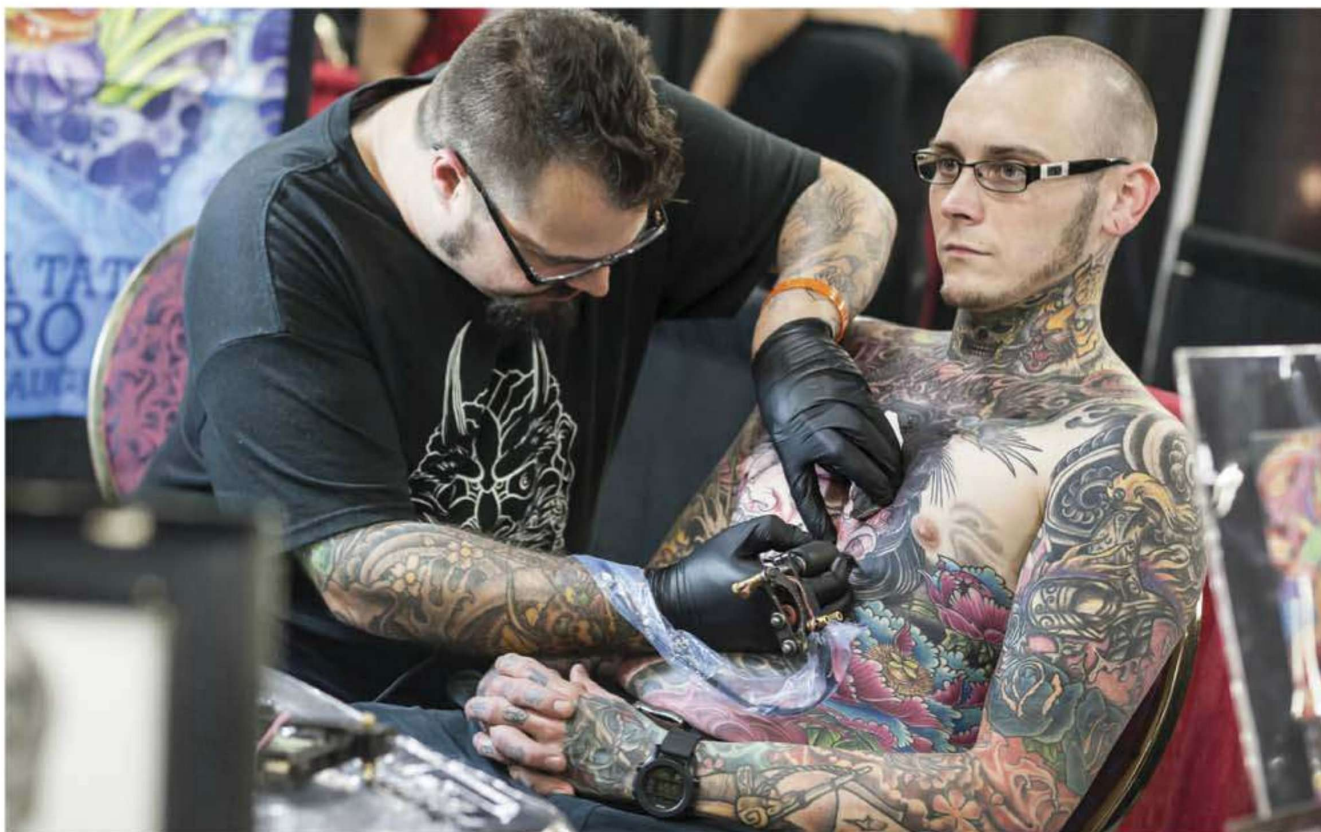
With an art show, burlesque performance, '50s fashion show and pin-up contest, there was no shortage of entertainment either, and something for everyone. The atmosphere was pleasant and the public and artists alike seemed to get into the festival spirit with all the positivity that accompanies it.

As the last rays of the California

sun were seen striking the ship's hull, the first notes of Pennywise's 'Revolution' resonated across the ship, and the end of the ninth show was fast approaching.

Ink-N-Iron has made a name for itself worldwide, which is in no small part due to the efforts of its organisers over the years. It would be audacious to suggest that tattooing is now fully integrated into society, but it is through events like this that we can push the doors open a little more to the masses who still have misconceptions about the culture that we hold so dear.

Long live the Queen! 🇬🇧



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I am looking for a tattoo artist who would be willing for me to watch and learn tattooing. I design tattoos for people and I'm very interested in learning how it goes from paper to skin. Due to childcare, I can only do evenings and Saturdays, unpaid of course. The information and experience is all I want. If there's anyone in the Folkestone or Ashford area - as I live in New Romney - that can help me, please contact Aileen on 07966 739257. Thank you.

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THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

I'm not much of a sports fan, but it's been pretty hard to avoid the Olympics this summer



Paula Hardy Kangelos

Luckily, along with the competitive spirit, the gritty determination and the new records there has been something on display that does pique my interest... the incredible physical form of the Olympians. These impressive bodies, uniquely tailored for excellence in each individual discipline have certainly livened up the games. Call me shallow if you will, but I prefer to think of my interest as an historically appropriate academic pursuit. After all, the figures and forms of the original Ancient Greek athletes were so admired that they were closely studied and reproduced by the artists of the day, carved into glorious statues of bronze and marble, statues that transformed the perfect muscular structure of the athletes into monolithic sculpted masterpieces depicting their extreme strength and ultimate grace of movement.

If, despite my desperate attempt at high brow historical justification you still think I'm just a bit of a pervert, consider that the ancient Greek athletes competed whilst totally naked, ostensibly to pay homage to Zeus, King of Gods – dedicating to him the arduous task of attaining peak fitness and aesthetic perfection, but presumably, really to impress and titillate the many spectators who visited the games then as today.

Now we get our fix of athletic nudity post games in glossy magazines and coffee table tomes, while our athletes wear scientifically devised and company sponsored outfits when competing. Interestingly, modern day competitors accessorise their sporting uniforms with something

far more interesting; tattoos.

London 2012 has surely been the most tattooed Olympics in the history of the games, and the tattoos on display have ranged from tiny single designs to full sleeves, many of which are dedications to the sporting discipline of the wearer.

Art for arts sake tattoos, while often the most aesthetically arresting aren't nearly as common as those tattoos that mean something, after all, to mark occasions, events and life experiences with equivalent marks on the body is almost instinctual; to do so connects our modern western selves with the primal practices of

'WHAT I DESERVE, I EARN'

TATTOO ON LOUIS SMITH, OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALIST, LONDON 2012

the past, and acknowledges that our humanity is shared with the tribal peoples of the present. These memento tattoos, whether they celebrate those that we love and care for or define the things that we believe make us uniquely us, are the tattoos of which we are most fond.

Perhaps the most popular of all memento tattoos are those that denote our survivals and successes, and such tattoos are a perfect example of basic human psychology. When a child achieves something and feels pride they will instinctively look up to see who is watching. If there is something of which they are ashamed, failure, perhaps, they will attempt to hide it. And yet despite these natural attempts at concealment, the emotion that many of us can recall most strongly is shame. I can remember with almost perfect clarity a day in primary school when I was unable to recite the alphabet, how my face felt hot and tight, how I couldn't

tell my mum what happened. I still haven't forgotten it 30 years later yet I have no equivalent memories of moments of pride. No wonder then, that we etch triggers for happy memories and tributes to our achievements on our bodies. We do it in celebration for our inner children, as reminders for our future selves and in demonstration of pride to those that may be watching.

Which brings me back to the Olympians... out on a worldwide stage, dressed in the colours of their mother countries, their bodies, triumphs and failures are scrutinised publicly by the media and privately by their coaches. But their tattoos remind us (and them) of their humanity, of their pride and of their love

and dedication to the sports that captivate them, ranging from archers to wrestlers, from Mongolia to the UK.

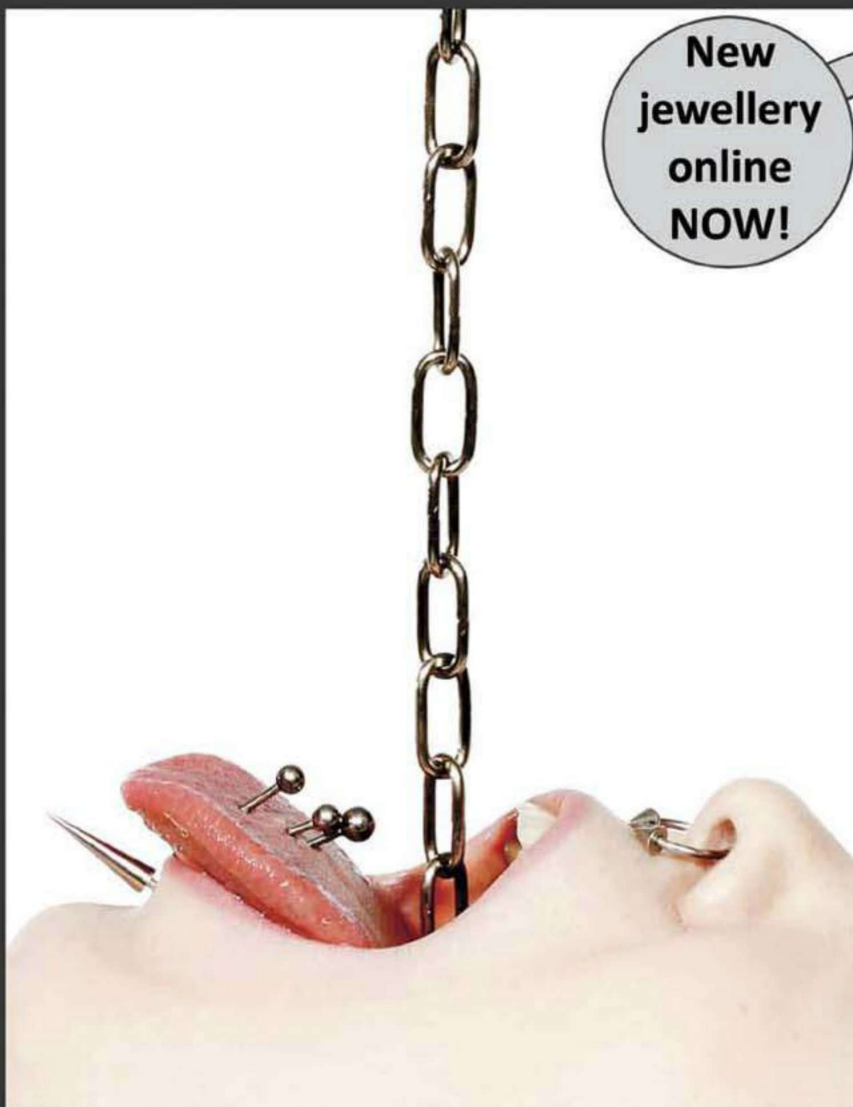
Ti'erra Brown, US hurdler, wears winged feet on her hip; Samoan weightlifter Ele Opeloge has a traditional Malu covering her hands and thighs; and beach volleyballer, Alison Cerutti of Brazil wears a black and grey woolly mammoth, a reference to his nickname. Many competitors marked their appearance at the games with permanent depictions of those famous interlocking rings – Australian diver, Melissa Wu's are heart shaped. Even 18-year-old Brit, Tom Daley, celebrated his bronze medal win with his first tattoo, a gift from his mother.

So while I'm still not a sports fan, I did fall in love with the Olympics just a little in 2012. And I certainly found a new respect for the permanent narrative mark of the memento and what it really means to wear your heart on your sleeve. 



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